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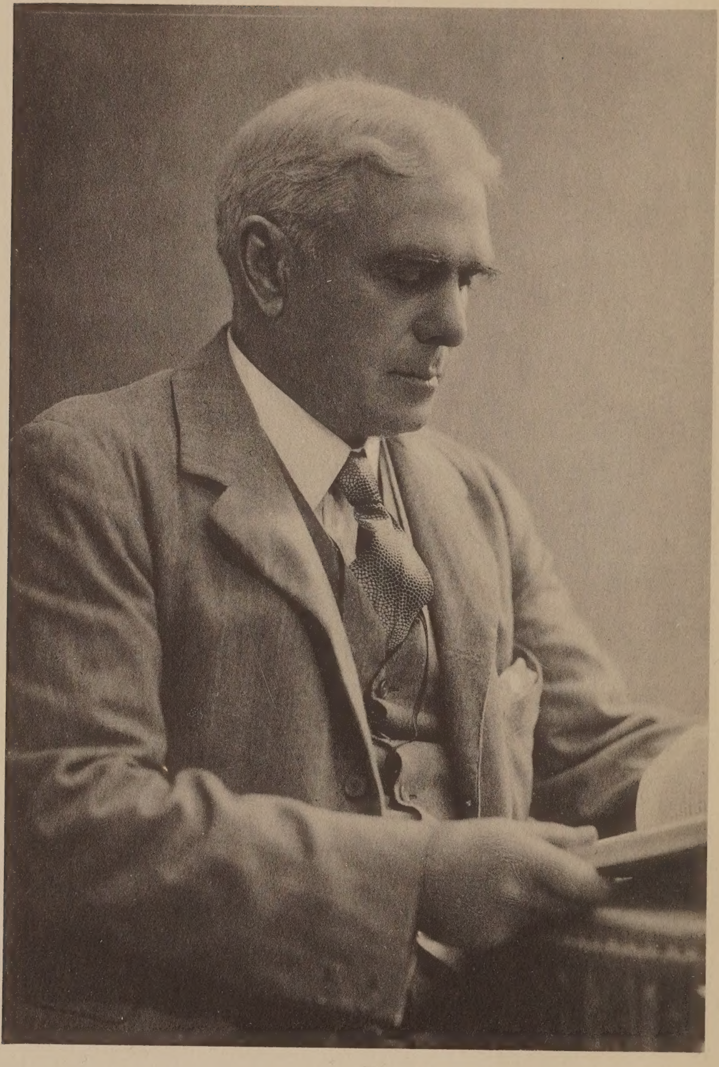
PULLING STRINGS IN CHINA



W. Ferd. Tyler

PULLING STRINGS IN CHINA

BY

WILLIAM FERDINAND TYLER

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TO

MY WIFE

AND

DAUGHTERS

PREFACE

My friend Basse and I were in consultation in my little house facing the racecourse at Shanghai. Some years before we had been junior officers on one of Sir Robert Hart's Revenue Cruisers; now we were considering how the three Viceroys controlling the Navy on behalf of the Empress Dowager should be advised about filling the vacancy of Commander-in-Chief. Having made our decision we laughed at the situation. 'When we retire,' said Basse, 'you must write our joint reminiscences; what shall we call it?' Thinking of the part that he was playing I suggested 'Pulling Strings in China'; and that was the genesis of this volume.

But later Basse and I went our respective ways, and then he died. The original intention cannot therefore be carried out in its entirety. Instead I write of my experiences and give Basse his place in them; but out of sentiment I keep the title, though it has lost the suitability it would have had, had Basse's share been added.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. H. B. Morse and Sir John Pratt for the scrutiny of my references to history, but that does not imply acceptance by them of all my views and statements on the subject. I am also indebted to Mr. J. Woltman, Mr. L. A. Lyall and Mr. S. F. Mayers for encouragement and advice.

BEAULIEU-SUR-MER,
March, 1929.

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PULLING STRINGS IN CHINA

I

EARLY DAYS

1. EDUCATION

My father was a village parson, who had been left by his father—an East India Company Commissioner—a comfortable fortune; but his family numbering nine, he made investments to increase his income and thereby lost the lot. So the cost of sending my elder brother to a public school was the limit of what he could afford, and I was kept at home with the idea of being tutored by him. Thus began for me in 1876 a nightmare of an education—Latin, Greek, Hebrew—chiefly these because they were my father's subjects, as also were Euclid and Logic. Algebra he tried to learn for the purpose of teaching me—a very painful process for both of us. The futility of it all tore as it were at my vitals; it got on my young nerves; it was like the continuous scratching of a sore place; and it was the worse by reason of the deep affection I bore for a very saint-like father and my appreciation of what he was so patiently trying to do for me. It ended in a sudden tearful and affectionate rebellion; I pointed out between my sobs the uselessness of the classics to one who could never go to college, and begged that I might be sent to the local grammar school with the farmers' and shopkeepers' sons; but my father shook his head at this. After my outburst, of which he never spoke, the lessons were dropped with the exception of Euclid and Logic; these with their problems were treated more as a mutual game than as instruction.

Looking back it seems to me that my father, with the problems of poverty, my unteachableness on the subjects he knew and his inability to teach me anything else, just gave up the matter in despair. In my mind the worrying thought of what would become of me was nearly always present, but it was a subject never mentioned in my hearing. I tried hard to educate myself—secretly in my attic room between dawn and breakfast. I had of course no system, and that my father's library was hardly helpful for the purpose is shown by the only books of that time which I can recall: *British Fungi*; *Intestinal Worms*, which interested me vastly; and Paley's *Evidences*, which I gave up as a bad job.

But at the age of fifteen relief came to this gnawing anxiety. My cousin Mary Tyler—on whom all blessings for her generosity—put up the money for my education. It was decided that I was to be a naval engineer and that—as I was so very backward—I should be sent to a military crammer at the same time as my brother, who was intended for the Army. My scholastic knowledge at that time was almost entirely confined to a very thorough knowledge of Euclid; but I had the advantage of a fallow mind, prepared in certain ways for study, and of the keenest wish to learn.

The incredible establishment which my brother and I now joined had been started by an usher from a well-known crammer to provide for the needs of a dozen or so young men who had been expelled from that place for rowdiness; and besides that group there were only my brother, myself and three others. The general idea was that, while the best of tuition would be provided, the question of using it lay entirely with ourselves.

The usher, who lived with his family in one of the intercommunicating pair of large semi-detached houses, made a mistake in psychology. He believed that his young men would play the game; that they would not so misuse the complete freedom given them as to turn his establishment into a public nuisance, and in other ways to ruin his venture; but that is what they did.

Their escapades were conducted in military fashion—at all events with military phraseology—and their tactics and strategy foiled the attempts of the police, which must have been made, to bring home a charge against them. There was the destruction by an explosive of a pillar-box ; there was the firing of a Crimean cannon, charged with gravel, which partly destroyed the large conservatory of a city magnate ; there was a tunnel dug from the garden in the direction of the neighbouring house, which was discovered by the next lessee. These were foreign activities ; domestic ones began when the usher refused to provide coal for bedroom fires ; a saw was bought and the consumption of such furniture as could be spared—chairs and deal tables—began. Lastly came the ripping out of wooden mantelpieces, and then, in a spirit of mere destruction, competitions were held for speed in drilling holes through a partition wall.

These events were spread over two or perhaps three terms. It was said that the magistrates took a hand in closing the establishment ; that could hardly have been necessary ; it ceased to exist by disintegration.

The place has been referred to as incredible ; it may at first sight appear incredible that no other could have better served my own particular needs ; but so it was. There was the individual attention of a staff of first-class teachers who took an interest in the curious example of ignorance which I presented ; and thus I got a start which would have been practically impossible at a school.

A year at a private school, failure to pass the naval medical examination owing to the doctor saying—quite incorrectly—that I had a goitre, and two years on the *Worcester* training ship, account for the rest of my education. Obviously it had been a very scrappy one ; but at the school I was top in mathematics and physics, and on the *Worcester* I carried off a lot of prizes and obtained an appointment as a Naval Reserve Midshipman.

I had no wish to go to sea ; I chose the life because it would soonest make me independent, and from the time I joined a sailing ship I ceased to be a charge upon my people.

2. SAILING SHIP DAYS

I was a sturdy youth of nineteen when—in 1884—I joined my first ship at Barrow-in-Furness as one of her four apprentices. She was a Liverpool barque of 800 tons, was bound to an Australian port with rails, and was owned by a firm with a Jewish name, whose choice as my owners was never explained. I had been to a ball the previous night in London, had left at the last moment possible, travelled up in my dress suit, changed at a hotel into dungarees and went down to the docks ; so the transition of circumstances was somewhat sudden.

The half-drunk Mate with a running wall-eye, the permanent ooze from which left a coloured mark down his cheek, was cleaning a pump, and he told me off at once to help him. The loading of the rails had just been completed. On the wharf was the Captain urging on the Ship's-husband—as the Captain-Superintendent of those days was named—the threat of severely bad weather and the impossibility of getting the rails properly tommed down and secured before the morning tide ; to which the other replied : ' Captain Jones, the tug has been engaged, the crew sign on this afternoon, you 'll take the ship to sea or I 'll get some one else who will ' ; and he turned away and hurried up the stevedores.

The next morning the bad weather had begun ; storm signals were flying for what later proved to be one of the severest and most disastrous gales known on the coast ; the tug had got hold of us ; on the wharf a couple of harbour officials were commenting on the folly of our leaving, and the Ship's-husband with cold-looking smile was wishing the Captain a pleasant voyage.

The wind was westerly and rising, the sea increasing, and it was not until after dark—the sky was heavily overcast—that the necessary offing for making sail had been obtained. Lower topsails and jib were set and the hauling in of the heavy tow rope then began. For some reason, possibly the darkness and an increasing sea, the tug let go the hawser without first easing back towards the ship, and the Captain went forward to see about this very awkward matter. He returned soon after, and for the first time since I had been on board he spoke to me. ‘ You ’re a training ship boy, aren’t you ? Well, let ’s see what you can do ; the mate is drunk, the second mate has all he can do setting sail and clearing up ; I must look after the hawser myself ; you stay here on the poop and see that the helmsman keeps her just full-and-bye ; don’t let her break-off, and for God’s sake don’t let her get aback.’ So he left me, and it was four hours or more before he came again.

At first, pride in this early and unexpected responsibility dominated every other feeling, but not for long ; for seasickness, which had commenced some time before, gripped me with foul violence. I had heard of the cure of drinking sea-water to get the business done with ; I now tried it, filling my cupped hand from the scupper ; as a consequence I felt that I would gladly die ; but by the time that my watch was ended that drastic remedy had served its purpose well.

We slumped down channel on the starboard tack under upper topsails, the wind rising and the sea increasing ; and then came the catastrophe we feared : the rails broke loose. Down into that inferno of slithering, greasy, massive railway irons—the upper layers rolling from side to side and sliding end on and fore and aft—were ordered the two Mates and all of the crew except a helmsman. Four hours later I was sent down to inquire how they were getting on. Vast clash and clatter of tumbling rails ; sickening smell of paint added to the thick closeness of a hold ; darkness made blacker by the flickering slush-lamps ; vain efforts to secure, to lash, to tom down those giant spillikins, which now criss-crossed each other in a monstrous muddle ; a dangerous struggle with impossibilities, which after another hour was given up. Then we squared away, and in a very few hours were off Liverpool—in the dusk—and there was shouting through a megaphone to and from a tug. ‘ What will you take us in for ? ’—‘ So and so.’—‘ No, that ’s impossible.’—‘ I ’ll do it for so and so.’ —‘ Can’t be done, my limit is so and so.’—‘ Good-bye and good luck.’

My next recollection is holding the lamp on deck while the Captain studied the chart of the Liverpool approaches. In his anxiety and doubt he spoke to me as if I were worth consulting, and I experienced another piece of pride. 'High water at eight; we can't stand off; we must do it now or never; we may be too soon before high water and, if so, we shall be lost upon the bar. What do you think, boy?'—'I should risk it, sir.'—'Well, I won't. If I did, I should probably lose my ship by my own act; I prefer to risk the Act of God.' He gave the order, 'Haul in the starboard braces,' and so we stood away on the port tack towards the north on the chance of being able to make Barrow-in-Furness again. Further north at daybreak another tug appeared; there was no bargaining this time—presumably salvage conditions held. The storm lulled a little; we hove to, used oil to make a smooth, and a pilot boarded from a little tubby boat that is so much safer in a seaway than a gig. Then again was safety snatched from us, for the tug in trying to take our hawser was swept by a sea so close across our bow that the jib-boom, striking her funnel, knocked it overboard. The tow boat, now herself in danger, proceeded in her crippled state towards the coast. And now we hauled the foreyard round, and again we were close-hauled on the port tack; but the coast between Formby Point and Southport was on our lee, and the delay caused by the boarding of the pilot had resulted in our drifting so far towards it that to beat out became impossible; so we dropped both anchors and veered out the cables to their bitter[1] ends.

The day before the galley doors had been demolished by the seas and the place gutted out, and now in addition to no cooking no fresh water could be had. There was no one on deck. With the Captain in the after-quarters were the mates, the carpenter, the sailmaker and the pilot; in our house, the most exposed and weakest structure of the vessel, were we four boys; in the forecastle were the crew. The opinion of the pilot had been repeated that there was little chance for us; we were in that worst of places, The Devil's Hole; to leeward of it there were quicksands, and no boat, he said, would stem the sea then running. That sea had not the mere up and down turbulence of ordinary waves. These were travelling waves with their vicious rush and hollow crests ; they leapt over our bow and bulwarks and every now and then they filled the deck from side to side.

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[1] Note the nautical derivation of *bitter end* in its popular sense—the tail-end, the end secured to the bitts.

In that little cabin were we four ; two were in their bunks. Norman Waitt and I—we had been *Worcester* boys together—were lingering over a last orange, hiding it greedily from the other two. Our thirst was bad, for we had been fed on ship biscuit and raw salt sprats for the last day or so, and there was not a drop of any normal thing to drink ; but Waitt's thirst was too bad for him to be limited by what was normal, so he mixed all the medicines from the little chest his mother had provided and drank the lot. They must have counteracted one another, for no bad effects resulted.

I have no recollection of feeling fear ; probably the combined misery of cold, of wetness—a scuttle had stove in—and overpowering thirst, saved me from anything further in the way of feeling. How miserable we were is shown by the oath we took on the Bible of my friend that, were we saved, we would never go to sea again.[1] And now through the outrageous din of crashing seas and battering debris came the snap of a breaking cable. We did not hear the breaking of the second one ; we learnt of it by the Mate's raucous shouting down the forecastle : ' Come aft, you blankity blankities, in ten minutes the lot of us will be in hell.' We got aft before we struck, and, as the vessel was then carried by the rushing waves, less water came on board. Then we struck the sand, and as each wave lifted and then dropped us the effect was as if we ourselves had been dropped ten feet or so.

The whole of us were now in the saloon. The men asked for drink, but did not get it ; the wall-eyed Mate was promising with blasphemies to lead a better life, if only he were saved this time ; the Captain, with his affection for the ship, which he had commanded many years, was saying ' Poor old girl ! Poor old girl ! ' each time she struck ; and the pilot was

[1] Waitt broke his oath before I did and was wrecked again and drowned.

cheering us by references to those quicksands on our lee that had swallowed up so many ships.

But Providence or luck came to our aid. At the top of high water we were thrown over a certain ridge, and at daybreak found we were in unexpected safety from the quicksands. We saw, too, dotted round the bay, perhaps a dozen other wrecks of sailing vessels. It was said to have been a record of wrecked ships in sight of one another ; and the loss of life—in those others—was very heavy. It was a very famous storm, that gale of '84.

We were landed by a lifeboat when the storm had lulled, and in the evening we got to Southport some miles away by walking. The wreck, we learnt, would be high and dry next morning when the tide had ebbed, so we hired a waggon with a pair of horses to take us there at daybreak in order to recover our effects before the wreckers got to work. We had made arrangements to that end when a man, well spoken and well dressed, offered to find us lodgings : and he took us to a brothel. For a time we were greatly puzzled by the place ; then realization came and we fled in anger and disgust. In my diary I find this entry : 'We were taken to a restaurant, but, not finding it to our liking, left it '—a curious understatement ; a genteel entry ; significant of many things in an early-Victorian boy. And then, in spite of our appearance—jerseys, dungaree pants and sea-boots, no coats, no hats,—we went boldly to the Royal Hotel at dinner-time, and were warmly welcomed and made much of.

I suppose it was the influence of that oath—which I took quite seriously for a time—and the memory of the fear of death, which that crowd of rough men expressed in prayers and blasphemies, that made me wish to be a Naval Chaplain. I was quite a pious youth in an ordinary way, and the experience of the wreck gave me cause for thought ; but it was not to be, and for a very curious reason. I wonder, indeed, if ever before or since so solemn and serious an intention has been frustrated by so ridiculous and scandalous a cause, which altered too the channel of my life.

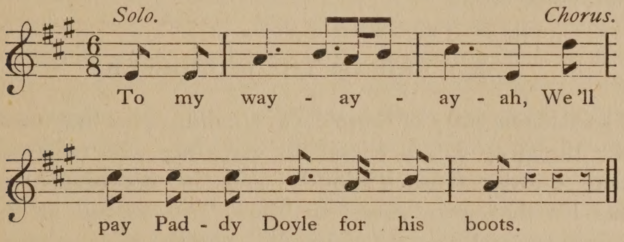
I was to be interviewed by a well-known tutor for Naval Chaplaincies whose name was Littlejohn. I happened to know the neighbourhood where he lived at Greenwich, so I took no note of it nor of his name ; the latter so easy to remember, even though my memory for names was always bad. I rang the bell, and then to my consternation realized that even that easy name had vanished from my mind. ' Is your master in ? ' would sound so like a butcher's boy and give quite a wrong impression. Then the door opened and there appeared a fluffy pretty maid. For a moment I hesitated, then inspiration came. ' Is Mr. Smallcock in ? ' I innocently asked. I must not tell what happened then—at first she looked puzzled, but not for long—of what she said and how she shooed me from the door and slammed it in my face. Then I realized what I had done, and I went away with my tail tucked well between my legs, feeling like nothing on earth, went home and told my father I had changed my mind and wished to go to sea again.

If my memory had not failed me—if I had not made that error—I might have been a bishop.

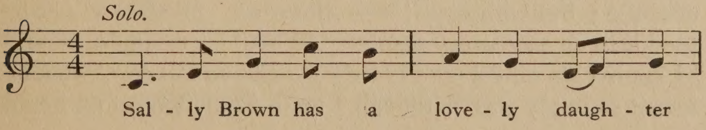
It is not my purpose to tell the story of those three years in a sailing ship. It was a period of great variety and contrast ; long spells of monotony varied by the strenuousness of shortening sail in gales and of wet and bitter cold ; the contrast of the crude life on board with my experiences at Sydney and Wellington, where I had introductions and dined and danced and picnicked and went to Government House, and fell most violently in love with the daughter of a bishop ; the wild interest of San Francisco in those early days—' You 'll get your neck shaved or your throat cut,' said the barber when I objected to being subjected to the local fashion ; the close contact with one's fellows on those long passages—six months from San Francisco to England without a glimpse of land ; a drunken Captain who thought I was the owner's nephew and made me read the Bible to him when he was threatened with D.T. ; there was a half-witted apprentice whom he baited—' Boy, what do you mean by letting the wind drop ; whistle, damn you, and whistle till it comes '—and Sam would whistle for hours on end until his lips were paralysed; then in a calm when the ship rolled heavily—'Boy, put a handspike in that scupper and heave as she comes up to ease the rolling'—and Sam would heave until his muscles nearly burst.

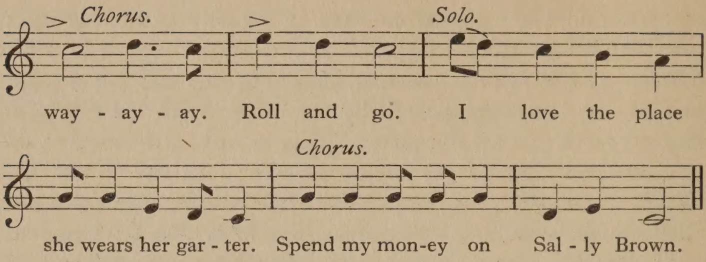
If you look at a map of the Southern hemisphere you will see that south of latitude forty there is a continuous belt of water a thousand miles or so in width right round the world, except where it is narrowed by Patagonia jutting into it; in that belt the wind is ever west and nearly always blows a gale. And round and round it ceaselessly travel great waves; they are straight furrows in the sea some sixty feet in depth—straight to the horizon on either side with the perspective of a railway line—and their crests foam over with a roar; there is nothing like that monstrous rhythmic movement elsewhere in the world. These are the Roaring Forties of the sailing days which formed the track for ships from the Cape to Australia and thence to the Horn. Our little barque slithered up and down those slopes, and the crest came rushing up astern and sometimes topped the poop and smashed the lashed helmsman against the wheel. But now the Roaring Forties are deserted.

'All hands on deck; stand by the main topsail halliards.' We are going to shorten sail. It is blowing hard, of course, and bitter cold, with that penetrating cold of sleet. It is night time—the sky densely overcast—and very dark; seas are lopping over the weather bulwark—heavy dollops of them—and the lee side of the deck is full of water. We are, of course, in oilskins and sea-boots with lots of clothes beneath—lumbering, slow-moving figures. There are curses in the air—curses of great variety—as one man gets his sea-boots filled and another slides on his back into the full lee scuppers. But now the halliards have been eased away and the bunt-lines snuggled home; we mount the weather rigging led by the lusty Second Mate, then crawl out on the yard, our feet on the swinging foot-rope, which bulges up and down between the stirrups with the movement of the men. With one's chest against the yard and one's body sloping and pointing aft, there is stability of sorts and one's hands are free to try and grasp the sail; but that sail is thick and hard and wet—perhaps it is even frozen—and it is only when it flaps that one can get a grip, and, if one is not supported by the others with their grip, a flap may jerk one off the yard. There is real earnestness to do the business and to get on deck again. In the bunt—the middle of the yard—is the Second Mate, and in cheerful tones with a curious yodling lilt he sings invariably that little ancient song whose meaning is unknown but whose purpose like all shanties is for team work. The officer's part is usually a mere sequence of conventional vowel sounds, though he may vary them by words; but the men's chorus, when they make their united effort, is invariably the same. Thus :—


Solo.
Chorus.
6/8
To my way - ay - ay - ah, We'll
pay Pad - dy Doyle for his boots.

'Call all hands. Stand by the main topsail halliards.' We are going to make sail, and this is a much more cheerful business. The weather is improving; the decks are dry perhaps. A few of us jump aloft to let go the gaskets which hold the sail; and then we gather round the bitts to hoist the heavy yard and sail. Either the Mate or the Second Mate leads the shanty. The former may select a well-known historical one about Napoleon with fixed and rather dreary words, such as 'Boney was a Warrior.' The more cheery Second Mate is likely to choose one about a girl.




Chorus.
Solo.
way - ay - ay. Roll and go. I love the place
Chorus.
she wears her gar - ter. Spend my mon-ey on Sal - ly Brown.

The more or less impromptu words were often rhyming nonsense, but sometimes contained a genuine sentiment, and others were distinctly Rabelaisian. They were very useful, those shanties. They turned an arduous piece of work into an entertainment.

3. MY FRIEND THE MURDERER

There is one story of those days in sailing ships that must be told : the story of my friend the carpenter who twice committed murder—conscientiously and in accordance with principles that were moral to him. The second of those murders was deliberately planned to pay the penalty, and he paid it. He pleaded guilty, sentence was passed, and he was duly hanged. To be hanged was what he wished for ; to be condemned and to die with unalleviated ignominy was what for a certain reason he intended.

His nationality was Norwegian but he called himself a Dutchman, in the sailor's generic sense of that word. His language was that of his class and race ; he was quite illiterate and signed his name in the form of a cross. In certain directions his vocabulary was very full and varied, used with a fine distinction ; for example, one could never mistake his use of the word ' bloody.' He knew nothing of its very respectable origin ; it was used by his fellow seamen only as a coarse term of abuse ; but with him it was otherwise. As often as not he used it in an excusatory manner. When, for example, he said ' I know I am only a poor bloody Dutchman but etc.,' what he meant to imply was ' although I am a Scandinavian on board a British ship and you Britons think a hell of a lot of yourselves, yet etc.' And he might call a man a 'bloody fool' merely as an affectionate reproof; but when he meant the real thing there could be no mistake about it.

Imagine a man with a huge soul, with a pondering mind ever reaching out for good, with utter fearlessness, entire unselfishness; and with a personality—appearance and manner—which stamped him as a leader of men. Let this man be illiterate; let his circumstances be of a humble nature, from which change is impossible; let perhaps the fineness of his character bloom only late in life; let these things be, and you have my friend. One thinks of what would have been the possibilities for such a man in other circumstances.

Life on a sailing vessel was the life of a separate little world. A voyage to New Zealand, San Francisco and thence round the Horn would take, perhaps, eighteen months. The single passage from San Francisco to Cork took us exactly six months, and we sighted no land on the way; there was time to get to know each other. And this little world was interesting enough with its strange medley of personalities and its occasional spice of danger and hardship against the background of general dull monotony. The Captain drank—to the limit of his small stock; the Mate was a kindly and capable officer; the Second Mate a smart young Jew: they were the least interesting of the crowd. There was the half-witted apprentice whom the Captain baited. His aunt—a fried-fish shop keeper—had heavily insured his life and sent him to sea in hopes that were not fulfilled. Another apprentice was a budding poet; he ran away at San Francisco and eventually got a university degree. Another got stage-struck in New Zealand, fell violently in love with the prima-donna, by some means got to know her, was taken on as a super, and ended in a tobacconist's shop. And among the forecastle hands, from the pure bred, soot black, nigger cook—'I am a true Barbadian born; I am no damned nigger, and don't you forget it'—to the Liverpool street urchin and the absconding bank clerk turned seaman, there was not one whose history lacked in interest. Such was the little world dominated by the personality of my friend the carpenter.

Even forty years ago were degenerate times for sailing vessels and our little barque carried no boatswain. Yet never had a ship a finer boatswain than the self-appointed one which my friend made of himself. By precept—of great variety and vigour—and by example he kept the crew up to the mark as far as possible. It was he, more than the mates, who reproved the hangers-back when there was some dangerous work to do, and it was he who set the example by doing it himself. His age was probably about 65—he did not know.

Early in the voyage I made friends with him, and I had the sense to know how great a compliment that friendship was to me. In our spare time we would forgather outside his shop and yarn; on such occasions his conversation was nearly always of a moral nature, of religion and of conduct in an introspective sense. His actual words cannot unfortunately be quoted; they are forgotten. All that remains is the sense of some of his views and some colour of his way of talking.

On the subject of religion he said in effect: 'God !—of course there is God. How else could you explain anything; but about Jesus Christ I don't know the first damned thing. I suppose I ought to, and, that I don't, bothers me a bit; but I am only a poor ignorant bloody Dutchman and it is not my fault.' On the subject of conduct he said: 'A man may have a character like a kinked rope, and if he has I don't know what happens to him in the end. But if a man is straight, if he does his own job and looks on his shipmates kindly, sees what they can do and cannot do, and acts accordingly, I don't believe that God will blame him for other things.'

It was some time before he told me of his views about human vermin. 'We kill fleas and bugs and rats because they are vermin. Why should not human vermin—men who are without doubt absolutely poisonous and harmful to the world—also be killed?' It was still later that he told me how, some years before, when his ship had foundered and they had taken to their boats in the middle of the South Atlantic with little chance of ever reaching shore, he had led the crew in the lynching of their vermin captain. They had left him cursing on the sinking ship, and from the off-lying boat my friend had voiced the judgment of the men that he must die, and why; but he jumped overboard and swam off to the boat; and alongside it they held him under water and drowned him like a real rat.

The telling of this story by my friend only partly shocked me. I had myself seen examples of brutality in the exercise of the extraordinary power which a captain wielded on a sailing ship; and I had heard of many others. But against such a deliberate and cold-blooded killing I expressed myself strongly to my friend.

To this he replied in effect: ‘You are a young man in a different state of life and you are educated. Perhaps you are right; but I can only act according to my lights, and I thought, and still think, that what I did was right. I count on God to deal with me according to my intentions.’

Those views of his were expressed quaintly and pungently but extraordinarily clearly in spite of his limited vocabulary, and they were interlarded richly with the swear-words of the sea. It was ethics that then appealed to him, though he did not know the word. But later, he asked me questions about religion. It was his initiative—I had shed my early piety to some extent—but I answered him as best I could. It started with my telling him, as a thing of interest, the origin of ‘bloody’ as an oath. He was very much impressed but quite disgusted. ‘By our Lady, is it? That ’s a hell of a swear-word for a sailorman. I have cursed by Christ, but I ’ll be damned if I ’ll curse by a woman, whoever she was’; but it was from his interest in what she was that grew apparently his interest in Christ. My answers to his questions were brief and only historical. I made no attempt to teach a lesson; but he reached one as though by inspiration. Of prayer he would not know the meaning, and I never mentioned it; but I think that from that time he lived in one long prayer of unexpressed desire.

It was some weeks after this that he told me that he was seriously thinking of another killing. Quite unconsciously, I think, he had prepared the way for the confidence he gave.

I was reminded of the fact that our company had lost a half of their fleet of old-fashioned sailing vessels in the course of three years ; that the ship in which my first voyage was made was a total loss seven days after starting, owing to our having been driven out of port in a gale of wind before our cargo had been properly secured, and that my friend Waitt had been wrecked again and lost ; these and many other considerations pointed, my friend said, to the fact that for the sake of the high insurance the ships were sent to sea in the hope of their being wrecked. The instigation must have lain with the owners or one of them, but the actual perpetrator was the Ship's-husband.

What truth there was in this serious allegation it is impossible to say. The carpenter, who had been many years in the company, was convinced that it was so ; my own experience confirmed his view : the circumstances attending our being forced to sea in very bad weather, in an unfit condition, were unquestionably disgraceful and suspicious.

In due course my friend reverted to the subject and explained himself. I wish that I could reproduce his words—that I could show by them how the finest shades of meaning can be conveyed by a very limited vocabulary, but I have forgotten them ; I can only give the sense of what he said.

'I have made my last voyage. I am no longer fit to lead, because I am no longer fit to perform those dangerous tasks which in an emergency some one has to do. What I have done this voyage I have done with an effort. I am finished. I cannot bear to take a second place in ability to work. What then am I to do ? I have no savings, for I have lived like other sailors. When a man of my kind comes to this stage, what is there left for him to do but die ?

'But why should I die uselessly ? I have lived all my life trying to do my job and trying to make others do theirs. I have had regard for the weak, but none for the mere laggard, the coward and the wicked. All this has been life to me. Cannot I die to the same purpose ? Cannot I die in the same way that I have lived ? I believe that I can. I have been thinking about it for a long time past.

'You know that I have put one human vermin out of the world. I have it in my mind to kill another and to die by being hanged for it. My only doubt is whether I can kill Captain Jones in cold blood. The other killing was different; there was a fit stage for it, and I had a crowd at my back. It was an execution. I felt no doubt and no meanness about it; I felt only the stern necessity for just retribution. But this affair! How very different it must be. I shall face him, of course; but he won't know me, and there will be no time to say anything. And I shall be alone—so alone. No one at the back of me. All my life, whatever I did, I have had the little crowd there. I have thought I did not care for what they said; I know now that it meant a lot to me. And now this thing! What a stage! Coward—I, a coward! Jeers and loathing instead of a backing. You have told me that Christ died like that.'

There was a spell of silence after this, my old friend sucking his short clay pipe, his eyes with that curious inward look of pondering.

'I have told you how much I have thought of God and how I trust Him to play the game with a poor old Dutchman, who has done his duty to his shipmates according to his lights. As an ignorant old man I have thought that there was no more to do. But now I am not so sure about it. I have been thinking a lot of what you have told me. Christ! He died like that, did He, with curses and jeers flung at Him? And I have only used His name to curse with. How often have I, in anger, said "Jesus wept," when things went wrong!'

Again a spell of silence.

'I feel and I know that He will forgive me. I have no fear. But I would like of my own free will to do something to make up for my neglect of Him. But not to suck up, don't for a moment think that. You know it 's not my way.

'I have chosen to die by being hanged after having done what I think will be a last good deed; but I shall do this for my own sake, because my time to die has come. I have looked forward to the judge asking me if I had anything to say before he passed sentence. He would have heard from the ignorant old Dutchman what he had never heard before. Coward! I—a coward! Can't you imagine the particular hell I should give him before I finished up with: "Now get on with your damned sentence." He would never forget it for the rest of his life. How I should have enjoyed that part; it would have been the moment of my life. But that is not how Christ died, and why should I, old Dutchman that I am, have what would seem to me a better death than His? I will give up that pleasure and take the sentence without a word; and Christ will understand.

'But I want you too to understand, and that is why I tell you.'

Knowing the man's self-reliance and his determination in carrying out what he thought was right, I realized that it was not unlikely he would carry out his threat, and end his life by deliberate choice on the scaffold.

In due course I said good-bye to a man for whom I had a huge respect and great affection. 'Chips, I know it is no use to tell you that you should not do as you have threatened. I can only hope you won't, and that somehow or other you may get a job more suited to you now than going to sea; but I would like you to promise me that if you get into any trouble you will send a message to me so that I can come and see you. Here is an address that will find me.'

A wonderful light came into the faded blue eyes of my old friend, and his wrinkled and weather-worn face took on an expression of kindliness, which I had never seen before to the same degree.

'Sonny boy, you are very kind to a poor old Dutchman. I have never had a shipmate like you before. You have helped my old eyes to see better, but what is right for you is not right for me. I don't know what I shall do, but you may bet your last God-damned dollar I won't send for you. That is not my way. Good-bye.'

I suppose that the possibility of sending a warning to Captain Jones occurred to me, though I have no recollection of it. In any case, it could hardly have been of any use.

A couple of months later I saw an inch of news in a corner of the *Standard*. It read : ‘ Frank Olsen, carpenter of the barque *Cordelia*, was hanged in Hull jail for shooting Captain Jones in Broad Street.’ A lump rose in my throat as I read that news. It rises now again as I tell this tale.[1]

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[1] As this true story, which happened over forty years ago, is written as a tribute to the memory of my friend, his real name is given. All others are fictitious. The existence of the shipping company concerned has ceased for many years.

II

MEN-OF-WAR

1. NAVAL TRAINING

I HAD never wished to go to sea, but I had learnt to love its beauty—the seething phosphorescence in the night; the graceful curves of sails heeled over to the wind; the raging storm and those great straight roaring waves of the Antarctic seas; the calm and the fairy floating nautilus; and the shanties when we hauled the ropes.

But these belonged to sailing ships, and those craft were already on the wane. A merchant steamer was a very different thing and held out no attractions for me. Trading in the Pacific made some appeal. I had seen those white-sailed and white-awninged schooners in Sydney harbour; they were fascinating, and there were stories of kingdoms in the islands and of great fortunes to be made; but chances there were also on the wane. And anyhow I wanted something more substantial than playing with adventure. So now my idea was to exploit the Navy as far as the regulations of the Naval Reserve allowed; it might lead to something else.

The year of my arrival home was '87, the old Queen's Jubilee, when a great naval pageant took place at Portsmouth; and I got appointed to the *Devastation* as her solitary midshipman. When leaving Plymouth, the *Ajax* poked her long and vicious ram into our port quarter; but, trusting to a collision mat and the bulkheads of our stout old turret-ship, we kept our way and trailed into Portsmouth with our after-deck submerged.

My aim now was to do a year's service in the Navy; but the outfit would cost about a hundred pounds, and where could that be found? Not by my father; not by my cousin, who had already done so much for me. But I had a friend, who had given me a second home, treated me as if I were his son, shaped my manners with some severity, and showed me great affection. I owe him more than I can say. This was General George Roberts—an elder half-brother of the famous 'Bobs.' I boldly asked him for a hundred pounds on loan without knowing how huge a favour I solicited, for there was no security other than a life insurance and his faith in me. He was not well off, but he acquiesced at once.

I made my application and was appointed as Sub-Lieutenant R.N.R. to the *Leander* on the China Station with orders to take passage in the *Impérieuse*, which was commissioned as the new flagship for that station. We put into Plymouth for a day or two. Anchored in our neighbourhood were three small white-painted cruisers under the Chinese flag and pennanted; they were Armstrong-built to the order of Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, for preventive work; their four-inch guns were the first quick-firers of their size, and their officers were Europeans and mostly British. How spick and span and smart they looked! The very thing for me, if only I had known of them before. A year or so later I was an officer in one of them, and fifteen years later I was the administrative chief of the fleet, of which they were a part. But I had no premonition of that as longingly I looked at them.

My year in the Navy was a very pleasant time; every one was nice to me. The fact that I was a reserve officer made no difference; if anything, I was given more consideration. Thus on the passage out when we annexed Christmas Island for the British Crown, I was one of those selected to form the landing-party—a very special privilege. I have no intention of giving details of that time, but there are two stories that I think I ought to tell. The first has reference to poor Cradock who met his fate at Coronel. He wrote a book—*Sporting Notes in the Far East*—and in it referred to the question as to whether Pincher Martin really shot the bear. I was with the latter when he did it, and so can solve that doubt.

At Karsakov in Saghalien Island, Martin, Foote and I got leave to take the torpedo boat we carried for a sporting expedition. Our destination was a river some twenty miles away, and, because we had heard of the great black Saghalien bear, the biggest and most dangerous in the world, we took between us two cylindrical bullets for our shot-guns, which were all that could be mustered. Martin took also a fishing-rod, also a rook-and-rabbit rifle with a tiny bore on the off-chance of seeing geese, and on arrival he hired a native boat in the hope of hooking trout or salmon. Foote and I landed some distance up the river on the reed-bound shore—reeds some twelve or more feet in height. We had no idea that to enter them without a compass and with a hidden sun was dangerous ; we thought they were a fringe along the river side, and that we should get through them to higher land beyond. But it was no narrow fringe, and we pushed on through the reeds until we lost ourselves completely, and had no idea of where the river lay. And then to our relief we came across a track of tramped-down reeds ; but that pleasure was damped when shortly afterwards we saw impressions of monstrous puds and the still steaming evidence of some huge animal ; it could be nothing but a bear, and we had heard that they were as large as donkeys and very fierce. So we held our consultation, and our conclusions as to probabilities were these : the beast was either making for the water or leaving it ; they were inquisitive creatures, we had read ; perhaps this bear had heard our torpedo boat and had come down to see what it was all about. So it seemed more likely that it was heading for the river ; and it was the river which we also needed, so to follow on the track seemed the lesser risk. We loaded our chokes with No. 2 cartridge and our other barrels with those solitary solid shot ; and as we walked along we wondered what would happen if we met the bear—the choke, we thought, at fifteen yards, so that the pattern would not be too small to blind both eyes, and then the other barrel at quite close quarters. But no such grand adventure happened. We had walked for an hour or so—our ears pricked for the sound of crashing reeds, which never came—when we heard the sharp ping of Martin's little rifle. Then suddenly the track ended at the river bank, and there was Martin in the boat wildly excited and pointing to the beach beneath the steep-to bank ; we looked, and there lay a dead bear—as big as the brown bear one sees in a menagerie—yet it was but a cub.

Pincher Martin's tale was this : He was fishing, when the native got excited and pointed to the bank some twenty yards away, and there, framed in the reeds, stood a monstrous bear and its hefty cub. The effect on Martin was to paralyse him with astonishment and interest ; he made no attempt to seize and load that little rifle ; so he and the bears just stared at one another, and then they turned and went away. The spell broken, Martin loaded his rifle, though he did not expect to get a chance again ; but he got it, for the little bear came back to have another look, and Martin fired and got it through the heart.

When we returned, the news of Martin's exploit had been semaphored to all the ships ; for he was a character in the fleet—a wag, and popular. Now that evening there was an entertainment on the *Constance*, and a feature of the entertainment was a stump speech by an Able Seaman, blacked as a nigger ; he made his topical allusions, spoke of the Irish situation, and then came his peroration, 'But what is the interest of all these matters compared with that great question, in which the honour of the fleet, its reputation for veracity, and its sportsmanship, is now at stake. I need hardly tell you what that question is : Who shot that bear ?' That was the sense of it.

Cradock was at that entertainment ; I believe he was First Lieutenant of the *Constance*. The fleet dispersed next day, and hence the nature of the entry in his book.

The other story clamours for a record as evidence of a mystery in crustacean life.

It was one of two things. Either the learned professor at the Museum, who was the expert on crustacea, was wrong, or I had told a story which had no foundation in fact. I maintained that at Christmas Island, in the Indian Ocean, I had seen on a coral beach a number of monstrous spider crabs with a span from claw to claw of not less than twelve feet, and that these beasts, while similar in general shape to the well-known abysmal macrocheira, were yet materially different.

It is but eight years ago, so I must be discreet about the story of that interview. The professor plainly disbelieved me and I did not get the chance to tell my tale in full. The giant spider crab, he said, was always abysmal and could not come to land. I left him feeling crushed and took my grievance to the fish expert, who was kinder and tried to salve my feelings by telling me that, as an unconscious inventor of a fairy tale, I was in quite good company, and quoted interesting instances.

The story that the expert would not listen to is this :—

The *Impérieuse* went to China by the Cape, and on the way we visited Mauritius. After leaving it there were sealed orders to be opened by Captain May, and these instructed him to annex Christmas Island, to forestall, it was understood, a similar intention by the Germans.

At that time the little island was uninhabited ; it was mountainous, richly vegetated and cliff-girt, except where in a few places a combe ended at a coral beach. I was given the privilege of being one of the landing-party for the annexation. A cairn, surmounted by a boat's mast as a temporary flagstaff, was erected over a copper case containing a declaration of annexation ; a briefer statement painted on a board was nailed to a coconut tree ; the guard of honour presented arms and the island became British. While the cairn was being built, Surgeon Wales, Midshipmen Field, Potter and Cochrane, and myself strolled to a part of the shore separated by a ridge of rocks from where the party were at work. Coconut palms and other vegetation came within a hundred feet or so of the sea, and that space was a coral beach with the usual steep-to edge.

On the white sand there lay quiescent a dozen or so of spider crabs. Lying on the sand they did not look so very large ; their bodies were the size of a soup plate—I made this comparison at the time—and their legs were bent derrick-wise, with claws tucked under. Squatting thus they covered a space of, say, two or three feet in diameter. And then they moved. Their carapaces rose perhaps two feet, supported on their long thin legs of about an inch in width ; they were smooth—or comparatively so—not knobby, as I later learnt the macrocheira to be—and in colour a translucent-looking green. Standing so, the articulation of their legs caused them to cover an area of about five feet in diameter, though with their legs stretched straight they would, I estimated, measure twelve. And then, with their long arms waving in the air, terminated by little claws not much larger than a man's forefinger and thumb, they advanced menacingly on us. We threw lumps of coral at them, on which they retreated slowly but still threateningly ; I have an uncertain recollection of having broken the arms of one that was too adventurous, either with a stick or with my sword, which for a ceremonial occasion I may have worn. Half-way up the trunk of a coconut tree one of these creatures clung moveless and seemed to be watching the performance on the beach, and it crossed my mind that our adventure was of a Rider Haggard nature. We returned to the cairn for the ceremony, and my next recollection is that the cutter came round to the beach where the crabs were—presumably at the instance of the surgeon—and that under his direction we captured one—the smallest of the lot—and tied it up ; we chose the smallest as being the only one we could conveniently stow in the wide stern-sheets of the cutter. It should be noted that the Captain and the other officers shoved off in a gig abreast the cairn.

Let me here record the names of the officers who landed. There were : Captain May, now Admiral Sir William ; Lieutenant Hewett, dead long since ; Lieutenant Duff, now Admiral Sir Alexander. These did not visit the crab beach. With them perhaps were others, but these are all my notes refer to. Of those who saw the crabs there were Surgeon Wales, no longer living ; Midshipman Field, now Admiral Sir Frederick ; Cochrane, now Captain retired ; and Midshipman Potter, now dead.

There were conditions curiously adverse to notice being taken of our adventure. Normally the interest attached to visiting this little-known island would presumably have resulted in a day or two of exploration ; but our deep-draught ship had found no anchorage, the waters were uncharted and the weather was threatening, so as soon as the ceremony of annexation had been completed we were hurried back. The second adverse circumstance was this. On our returning to the ship we were greeted with the news that there was a case of cholera among the men ; so Wales, the surgeon, would have no time for his specimen, and doubtless it was at once thrown overboard. There was some anxiety for all of us, so what would normally have excited interest and perhaps have been formally recorded passed out of mind. There came, too, a time of quick-changing interests. Krakatoa, whose eruption a few years before had coloured our English sunsets, we passed close to next day ; the Straits of Sunda and the narrow Banka Straits, tree-girt to the water's edge ; then Singapore with social functions ; Hongkong the same ; and then Japan and the meeting with the fleet. There was everything against a record of our Christmas Island crabs.

Yet occasionally I told the tale, but always found it taken like that older story of the Barnacle Goose, which was seriously reputed to be hatched in barnacles growing on a tree in the Orkney Islands ; and thus in time I grew to doubt my own veracity, and discontinued any reference to the story. But the doubt I had was never as to the nature of the crab but only as regards its size.

Years passed by—some twenty of them—and I was resident at Shanghai. Making my usual midday visit to the club, I saw standing by the bar—famous for being the longest in the world—an officer in uniform. Clean shaven as he was, the years had made but little change ; for he was Potter. At once a memory of that beach and the realization of the opportunity to test my long-dropped story. I, too, was recognized at once, and with recognition followed eagerness on Potter's part and then his explanation. ' The chance that I 've been waiting for

for years! No! no! if you are thinking of those crabs, don't say it yet; don't spoil the evidence. Hear first what I have got to say. I 've told the story of that beach, and have never been believed. I 've wondered if I had become an unconscious liar, and the thing 's got on my nerves. Now write the size you say they were on a piece of paper, and I will do the same.'

We exchanged our notes. His size was eighteen feet. He was pleased with my evidence, but I was not so pleased with his; his exaggeration seemed to me undoubted, and, if so, might not I have done the same? However, the question was not so much the size as the nature of the beasts; on this point we compared alternately our memories. Yes, smooth carapaces, legs and arms, translucent green and claws quite small.

And now, with this addition, I occasionally told my tale again and made a note of it, which forms the basis, so far, of the record.

A few years later Cochrane, then the Captain of a cruiser, arrived at Shanghai. His evidence was most unsatisfactory. He remembered crabs and large ones. How large? 'Oh, about fifteen inches when spread out.' The story of the monster crabs he laughed at. Confronted with this disconcerting evidence, I wrote to Admiral May. He replied most kindly and regretfully to the effect that he knew nothing of large crabs having been seen on the island.

At this stage of my notes appear the words, 'What am I to believe now?'

As more years passed by, other evidence cropped up. At a garden party at my Shanghai house, the late Mr. Stephen—Manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank—and I were talking of the war and the recent sinking of the *Emden* at Cocos Island. He mentioned that he knew Ross—the elder—the owner of that island. When I referred to the fact that Ross was reputed to have been the first white man to land on Christmas Island, Stephen said, 'It is curious you should mention that. Ross told me about the landing and how he found traces of previous visitors ; and he told me also about some monstrous crabs that had a stretch of at least twelve feet.' Later he remembered the following story, which he quoted as confirmatory of mine : In the Straits Settlements he had met a doctor, who had accompanied the first phosphate expedition to the island. The doctor, in speaking of the place, spoke of the beri-beri epidemic which had decimated the coolies, and went on to say that the most distressing feature of the affair was the inability to keep the corpses covered up, as the largest available rocks—presumably lumps of coral—were not heavy enough to prevent their removal by monstrous crabs and the disinterment by them of the bodies.

Again appears the note : ' What now must I believe ? '

Some years after, at the British Legation at Peking, I met Admiral Sir Alexander Duff, and he reminded me—I had forgotten—that he had landed on the island. Regarding the crabs he said : ' I was busy superintending the erection of the notice board and had little time to look about ; I remember hearing that there were large crabs on the beach, but as regards their size I cannot say.'

In 1920 I took my family home via Suez. At Singapore we met the curator of the Museum, John Moulton, a nephew of my wife, and for the first time I had the opportunity of discussing my story with a naturalist. He took it seriously, urged me to represent it to an expert on crustacea and gave me an introduction for the purpose. Further, he found a volume of the records of the naturalists who had visited the island in about 1887, and we studied it. No reference was made therein to spider crabs, but much was made of *Birgus Latro*, the Robber Crab, of which a specimen was shown me. My comment on that matter is reserved till later.

Arrived at home, I found that Field, then a Captain, now an Admiral—the only witness so far unapproached—was at the Admiralty, and the following are extracts from his letter on the matter :—

'I remember very clearly our visit to Christmas Island in the *Impérieuse* in 1888. . . . I remember very distinctly the enormous land crabs. . . . I should say the solid part of the body ranged from 9 inches in diameter to 18 inches. . . . I remember also that a party of officers obtained permission to take guns on shore. . . . I distinctly remember this party saying on their return that one of them had shot a couple of frigate-birds and that before he could pick them up they were captured by the crabs. . . . It is difficult for me to say exactly what the spread of their legs would be, but a crab able to run off with the body of a frigate-bird, probably with a wing-spread of 5 to 6 feet, before a man, who shot it, was able to pick it up, must have been a very large and powerful beast, and I have no hesitation in supporting your evidence that, if stretched out to the full, the spread of their legs would be something approaching 10 to 12 feet, though in their ordinary attitude this would not be so apparent.'

Later, Admiral Field, having read the draft of this chapter, wrote further: 'You can certainly include what you have said about my evidence. . . . I have often told the story myself, and there is no doubt the crabs were there in 1888, whatever may have happened to them since.'

Let us revert now to the Robber Crab as recorded in the book referred to, and note the disconcerting facts about this creature. It is the largest known of land crabs and it climbs trees; but in all other particulars it is the diametrical opposite of the crabs I say I saw. Its carapace is long and lobster-like, its legs are short, and its claws are huge and heavy; it is a ferocious beast and eats anything that comes its way. Doubtless it was the Robber Crab that ate the Chinese corpses; possibly it was the Robber Crab that stole the frigate-birds.

Could it have been the Robber Crab we saw, and that by some weird antithetic process of imagination we converted its mental picture into its very opposite? It is possible perhaps that a phenomenon of this kind might occur in one; but how account for the evidence of Potter, for the story Stephen told, and now the evidence of Admiral Field?

It remains to be said that at the time of my visit to the island I had, to the best of my knowledge, never heard of a spider crab. I have a clear recollection of my astonishment some years later at seeing a specimen of a macrocheira—it had a span of fourteen feet—with its knobby protuberances: my first assumption that it was the crab I had seen, my disgust that I had so misdescribed it, and then my realization of it being of an abysmal nature and therefore of another species.

And now, what about it? It was one of two things, I said at the beginning; which of the two was it?

The evidence of Admiral May and Admiral Duff is neutral; that of Captain Cochrane and the expert is strongly adverse; but there remains the evidence of Admiral Field and myself, and there remains that of Potter and Mr. Stephen, which however is second-hand to all except myself.[1]

2. CHINESE REVENUE CRUISERS

During the night watches of that service in the Navy I turned over in my mind the question of the future. One does not think tidily on such a subject—one merely turns it over and sets one's subconscious mind to work. I found myself in China—in effect—and in China I would stay. So I applied to Sir Robert Hart for a position on his Indoor Staff. He replied offering me one in his Revenue cruisers; and the day that I finished my service in the Navy, I joined as Third Officer one of those smart white gunboats I had seen a year before at Plymouth. Let me here digress to refer to the likelihood that there was a bias prompting me to stay in China.

My father was visiting a farmer, and I, some twelve years old, was with him. There were peacocks in the barken—as they call the yard in Somerset—and one of these flew up, settled on my shoulders from behind, and pecked my head and made it bleed. I was very much alarmed—possibly wept—but what I remember clearly are my father's words. 'Never mind, my boy; take it as an omen that some day the Emperor of China will decorate you with the Peacock's Feather.' This playful prophecy had no conscious influence on me; I forgot it until years after I was reminded of it by my mother. But in view of the fact that I later got that very rare distinction for a foreigner, it seems rather more than likely that my subconscious self[1] was urging me to make possible the fulfilment of the prophecy.

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[1] A new expert in crustacea reigns at the museum. He was good enough to read this story, was most courteous and kind, and told off an assistant to show me specimens of all the Christmas Island crabs, not one of which had the slightest resemblance to those I saw. But, alas! he also put me in the category of those who unconsciously tell fairy stories.

I served in the Revenue cruisers from '89 to '94. They were officered by foreigners—mostly British—a captain, three deck officers, three engineers and a gunner. We flew a pennant, had a quasi-status of a man-of-war, and took it very seriously. We were jealous of our dignity. We piped and bugled, and in the morning crossed top-gallant yards and sent them down at night; and on Fridays went to general quarters. We wore swords on occasion; and the captain flew a pennant in his gig when he called on foreign captains. This status had its origin in the days before my time when there were but a few British, French and American gunboats on the coast, and all the captains were acquainted.

We had seven sea-going vessels in the Customs fleet. Some were engaged in tending light stations on the three thousand miles and more of coast; there were the ever-changing channels in the approaches to Shanghai to be surveyed; there were official passengers to be transported; rarely there was a venture after pirates; and there was opium smuggling to be prevented —if we could—between Hongkong and the mainland and between Singapore and China.

In those days the boundary between China and Hongkong ran across the narrow Kowloon peninsula, and the object of the smugglers was to get the opium across it. They would come in a band of a hundred or two, armed with Winchester repeaters ; not so much to take the stuff by force across the frontier as to guard it when they got it from rival bands. There were fights in the night between these bands and the Customs guards, with lots of firing, and a field-gun might take part ; but it was mostly noise, though sometimes a man or two was killed or wounded. In that shore work I took no share. The part of the cruisers was to patrol the surrounding waters—mostly at night in steam cutters. My memory of that duty is not of adventures—I was only under fire once—but of those narrow bays overshadowed by high hills and sooty dark, where I lay in wait like a spider for its fly ; the lights of Hongkong in the distance and the clear starry sky.

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[1] This—and other references of the kind—is due to the fact that early in life and before I had heard the word *subconsciousness* I realized that I was subject to a guiding influence independent of my knowledge. I discarded the idea of an occult cause for it, and jumped to the right conclusion —that the knowledge one is conscious of is but a tiny fraction of what lies hidden in one's brain.

For two seasons we cruised in the open sea south of Hainan Island to intercept the junks from Singapore that might be smuggling opium. These were the remnant of those deep-sea junks that in olden days sailed as far as Aden and the Red Sea, long before the Europeans knew how to build much more than rowing craft. It was from those junks that the Mediterranean builders learnt of lee and centre-boards, of keels, of multi-masts and of sailing on a wind : they were the prototype of all our modern shipping.[1]

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[1] That is the impression I gained from what I read from time to time about the history of China's ancient sea-borne trade, but I cannot quote authorities. The subject seems to be historically obscure. I cull the following notes from V. C. Holmes's *Ancient Ships* :—

There were big craft on the Nile in 5000-6000 B.C., supposedly of Libyan origin. The first deep-sea craft on record—one trading in the Red Sea—dates back to 2800 B.C. A famous voyage to the land of Punt (perhaps Somaliland), to get precious things for Pharaoh, took place in 1600 B.C. An illustration of a large vessel of that period shows that tiers of oars were used, but there was a large square sail with a yard and with another spar to which the foot was laced, and this spar was as long as the boat itself—100 feet or more. Rameses III. built a fleet at Suez. After the Egyptians came the Phoenicians as naval architects and navigators. They made voyages to Cornwall and possibly to Ireland. Somewhere between 610 and 594 B.C., and acting under orders from Pharaoh Nakau, they are reputed to have circumnavigated Africa, taking two years for the job.

There is almost a complete absence of information about early vessels that relied chiefly on sail power, as apparently the merchant vessel must have done. I know of no illustration that shows more than one mast with an inefficient square sail. On the whole, it seems probable that China and Egypt developed navigation and naval architecture independently, and that the Chinese were the more advanced. According to Mr. Selfridge, in his

But in our times Singapore was the limit of their ventures. They made their homeward passage in the south-west monsoon, which was usually a strong breeze or half a gale, and with the current always running south against the wind there was a short and nasty sea ; and in that sea we lowered our gig and boarded, with the junk hove-to and rolling out her soul. One would think the side to board would be the lee side ; but it is not, the weather side is better owing to the drifting of the junk.

Those were very happy days—ideal from a boyish point of view—the more so that they did not lack occasionally in real danger. There was more than a spice of risk when in a thirty-foot steam cutter one was caught in a sudden gale in the open sea. Typhoons were regular experiences vastly awe-inspiring in their monstrous rage and fury. They usually gave ample notice of their coming, so that our little gunboats had time to get to some degree of shelter ; but shelter, even in a land-locked harbour, does not always spell immunity, for, though the weight of the ship's cable in its catenary curve forms a spring which mitigates the effect of wind and sea, in a typhoon the vicious force is such that the cables periodically whip out like a solid bar and cause a very dangerous strain.

There were various sporting elements in that life. Boarding junks in half a gale has already been referred to. There was landing at lighthouse stations in a sea-way that gave the boat a rise and fall of fifteen feet and more against a wall of rock. One approached bow on and jumped out on the rise ; and then the boats quelched down in the foaming backwash, and that backwash sucked the boat clear from the jagged rocks which the receding wave exposed. Then there was landing in a heavy surf, and, what was far more difficult, the getting out again. We became really skilful at that sort of thing and in handling boats in general.

But looking back, my memory of that time is not of dangers or adventures. Partly it is of a happy, care-free, varied time ;

Romance of Commerce, traders from the Indian Ocean arrived in China in 680 B.C. Regarding this, Mr. Selfridge informs me that although he is certain the information is definitely authentic, he cannot now trace its source.

partly of my companions, three of whom—Williams, Eldridge and Myhre—are among my dearest friends to-day; but mostly it is of ridiculous events. It may be that the more serious adventures of my later life throw up in relief the humour of those early days. I could fill a small volume with stories of that time, but here I must confine myself to telling how young Payne-Gallway cupped the Captain.

He, the Third Officer, was a most delightful person—so good-looking, such a charming smile, such perfect manners and so scrupulous—yet in efficiency, as an officer, he lacked something. He tended to hesitate. I had told him that when in doubt it was rarely the right thing to mark time, to do nothing; it was usually better to do something definite, and, if it proved the wrong thing, to correct it—if he could.

Now our Captain got ill. We were stationed in the neighbourhood of Hongkong, so I wrote to Dr. Cantlie—who later was Sir James of Harley Street—describing Captain Ross's symptoms, and sent Gallway in the pinnace with the letter. In due course the boat returned, and Gallway came on board, saluted, then turned to me with eagerness: 'I say, do you know how to dry-cup?' Not quite, though I knew the principle of the thing—a pinch of cotton-wool with a few drops of spirit ignited in a tumbler, then slapped upon the skin; the forming of a vacuum, and the flesh sucked up inside the tumbler. But knowing the cause of Gallway's eagerness I said I did not know. 'Well, I do,' he said, 'Cantlie showed me. We have got to cup the Captain's back, and I have all the paraphernalia here,' and he indicated the large parcel he had brought on board.

We went to the saloon and unpacked the parcel—a quart of spirits-of-wine, a full-sized roll of cotton-wool and a special thick-rimmed tumbler. Then Gallway got very busy and important, went to Ross's cabin and turned him on his tummy and bared his back; he took the tumbler and put a good wad of wool in it, looked at it thoughtfully, put in as much again and pressed it down. I now watched to see how far he would go before he asked for help. He poured in some spirit, looked for it in the glass but could not find it, so he poured in more—

a wine-glassful or so. In the meantime, as I did not want the ship on fire, I had placed a wash-hand basin on the table. Gallway put the tumbler in it and lit a match, and I noticed that his lip was twitching, the sign with him of nervousness and doubt ; but he pulled himself together and lit the thing, and a flame shot up and reached the deck above. Gallway did not look at me ; some seconds passed, and in the meantime the paint on the panelling was blistering and the glass became white-hot. Then he went into the bathroom and came back with a towel, and I thought that he was going to douse the flame and give the matter up ; but I was only partly right. He doused the flame, took the white-hot tumbler in the towel and, before I could prevent him, had not only placed it on poor Ross's back, but pressed and twisted it and bored a ring right through the skin ; and Ross, who believed that cupping was a painful process, bore it like a Briton. With his mouth full of feathers, which he had bitten from his pillow, he lay there spluttering and groaning.

Gallway followed me to the saloon, and it was he who did the talking. ‘ I know that that was wrong. I 'll do it right next time ; please, please, don't take the job away from me ’ ; and so I let him. This time the wool and spirits were but a fraction of what he had used at first, but still were far too much ; and, when again he fetched the towel, I did not dream he would repeat that awful operation ; but he did so ; he bored a second ring in Ross's back.

Later he explained that in each case when he applied the incandescent tumbler he was carrying out my maxim to do something when in doubt. He was delighted when the doctor came next day and said that nothing could have been better for the Captain than that treatment ; it was the equivalent of the cautery counter-irritant only given up by the profession on account of its great painfulness.

3. THE CHINESE NAVY

The way of the Chinese constitution was to govern by and through the Viceroys of the provinces ; so it was Li Hung-chang of the northern province Chihli—the most powerful satrap of that time—who owned a fleet. Nanking and Canton also had their fleets, but their craft were obsolete. Li Hung-chang's was very different. His ships were up to date—two battleships with ten-inch guns, armoured cruisers, light cruisers and torpedo boats—and he had engaged an English naval officer—Captain Lang—to train the officers and crews. Ting Ju-chang was the Admiral ; Lang also held that rank, but in an ambiguous Chinese form which might mean anything from the second in command to an adviser with the rank of admiral. Lang believed it was the former, so, when Admiral Ting was called to an audience at Peking, he claimed to take his place ; but Liu Poo-chin, the senior Commodore, maintained that Lang was only an adviser and that the post was his. Peking supported Liu, and Lang resigned. It did not seem a matter of world importance at the time ; but it was. It was the decadence of the fleet after Lang had left it that caused the Japanese to venture on their war with China about Korea and gave them victory ; it was their holding of Korea that brought about their war with Russia ; and it was the weakening of Russia in that war that gave Germany the chance to have a shot at world dominion.

It was shortly after Lang resigned—in 1891—that we lay at anchor with the Chinese fleet in Kowloon Bay on the outskirts of Hongkong ; and there I made my first acquaintance with it. I visited the flagship and commenced my friendship with Woo the Flag-Lieutenant, Tsao the Gunnery Officer, and Commander Li, which lasts until to-day. I was vastly interested in that battleship and all they showed me, and left full of admiration for the Chinese fleet.

In 1893 Li Hung-chang held a review of the fleet in Northern waters, and I happened to be there in a Customs cruiser. So I saw the Chinese fleet doing its little best after a few years of deterioration since Lang had left ; I saw them in their fleet manœuvres, in their gunnery practice and in their battalion drill on shore, and took the keenest interest in it all, and sent a report about it to Sir Robert Hart.

During the manœuvres a Japanese man-of-war appeared upon the scene, exchanged salutes, watched what was doing, made no communication and then departed ; a few months later the two fleets fought.

Already there were rumours of Japanese aggression in Korea —a place of doubtful suzerainty regarding China and Japan— which might lead to war ; so I considered—but only as a thing of interest—the relative fighting strength of the two countries. Quite obviously the matter would be settled on the sea ; and I concluded, from the meagre information which I had, that the Chinese stood a reasonable chance.

The bombshell fell with about the same degree of notice as in the Great War. A Chinese transport carrying troops to Korea was sunk by a Japanese squadron ; and the fat was in the fire.

Let me tell how this affected me. I had often thought and said how desirable it would be to have two lives—one for adventure, in which case I would go a-whaling, and one for getting on, with one's nose on the grindstone of service to one's chief or to one's cause. And here rose an opportunity for a combination of the two. When I thought of Woo and Tsao and how they showed me round their battleship and filled me with admiration for the detailed knowledge of their job that they possessed, I could hardly think that I could be of any use ; but I thought of my report about the Chinese fleet. Could I not serve a useful purpose by recording for our Admiralty the facts of that great naval fight that must now come off ? That was the conscious factor which decided me to volunteer. It need hardly be explained that to go fighting in this way is a very different proposition to doing one's normal service for one's country. The one is duty, the other is adventure ; it is also a misdemeanour. The stimulus is essentially different in the two. In the case of the adventurer the stimulus may be an appeal to help a cause ; it may be mere self-advantage in a gamble ; or it may be some form of desperation, in which any change—perhaps even the prospect of death—is welcome. I have known cases of all three. But none of these affected me so far as I am aware. I knew nothing of the justice of the quarrel ; I had been under fire and disliked it very much ; I was happy where I was. My one idea was to make a technical report, as I saw but little chance of any one more competent than myself for doing so being present. There was some unselfishness in this, for I knew quite well that by a breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act I should place myself beyond the pale of any recognition of my service ; and so it proved ; but anyhow, as things turned out, reporting took a very secondary place in my activities.

I decided to volunteer. The question was how to do it. Ask permission of Sir Robert Hart ? No, not that, for it would impose undue responsibility on him. So I sent the message : ‘ If opportunity occurs, I intend to volunteer for active service.’ The answer came : ‘ Tyler transferred to Tientsin.’ The rest remained with me. At Tientsin I received my first personal letter from the great I.G., as the Inspector-General was called. In effect he said : ‘ Your wish is after my own heart ; but do not forget that your risks will be more than that of normal war. Your authorities may imprison you for a breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act ; the Japanese will shoot you if they catch you ; and you may be murdered by the people that you serve.’

At Tientsin I dealt with Detring and von Hanneken. The appointment of the latter as Co-Admiral was needed, among other things, to save Admiral Ting from summary decapitation, in case of a reverse ; for that is what, in accordance with ancient practice, the Empress Dowager would order. A soldier engineer to be an Admiral ? That did not bother Li Hung-chang, for Ting himself was a cavalry officer and made no pretence of knowing anything about a ship. As for von Hanneken, it is doubtful if any one else—say an English admiral—could, in the circumstances, have better filled the post. To complete this burlesque setting of the stage, I, a Naval Reserve Sub-Lieutenant, was appointed Naval Adviser and Secretary to von Hanneken ; so there we were.

My own contribution to a discussion of the war with Detring and von Hanneken was this :—Buy telegraphically that new

Chilian cruiser for delivery in our waters—I think she was the *Fifteenth of May*—the fastest cruiser in the world. Pay any price they ask for her, no haggling and no delay. Give me command of her. Some of her officers will volunteer and I will find others somehow. Chinese gunners, stokers and deck hands will do for me. I will harry the enemy coast and shipping. If we can delay fleet action until my ship is in commission, all will, I think, be well ; for then their first thought will be to tackle me. They will detail the *Yoshino* and other fast cruisers to watch the coaling ports ; and thus so much the better for our fleet. The enemy troops are bound to win in Korea and invade China from her frontier, and so give encouragement in that direction. In these circumstances the Japanese will not be keen to stake their all on a fleet action ; and thus the situation will develop to our advantage ; and, if I am successful, they will be sorry that they ever went to war.

Something of the sort had already been considered, they said ; but the idea now caught on. The Viceroy agreed. A few days later the purchase was said to be completed, and I was cock-a-hoop at this most gorgeous opportunity. My mind was full of scheming about officers and coal ; and a report for the Admiralty became a very secondary thing.

A fortnight later came the shock. The Chilian price had not included ammunition—or a reserve of it, I am not sure which—and negotiations ceased. In this way is history made ; but had the Japanese to do with it in one way or the other ? It is more than likely.

Von Hanneken, a Prussian, was a fortification engineer and had built the defences at Port Arthur and Weihaiwei—a fine fellow and a fine character, though he showed some curious traits in later life. He had been with the soldiers on the transport *Kowshing* when she was sunk by the Japanese and the drowning men were fired at in the water. He swam—I am afraid to say how many miles—to an island, and so was saved ; he was quite a sportsman with his life.

He and I joined the fleet off Taku Bar and then proceeded to Port Arthur, where a scrutiny of ammunition lists showed for the first time the tragic fact that for the ten-inch guns of the battleships there were only three big shell and that the smaller practice ten-inch shell were also sadly short ; for the other ships there was a reasonable stock. A telegram was at once sent to the Viceroy that the fate of China depended on the arsenal working night and day at making shell ; that the matter was of such great urgency that he was begged to trust to no one —not even the Director of the Arsenal—but to go himself and see that it was done ; but of course that was not done, and some weeks later a transport brought some shell and a letter from the Director : ‘ The four calibre shell could not be manufactured ; of two and a half calibre shell we were now supplied with so and so ; that would complete the normal complement, and that was all we could expect from him.’

Soon after we joined the fleet I was appointed Co-Commander with Li Ting-sing. In my diary I grouse at the falsity of my position—no authority, only advisory functions—and I grouse at Li himself ; but that was quite unjust. I had to earn confidence, and Li Ting-sing was always charming to me. Before that appointment I had messed with a British ex-bluejacket and a German engineer, but now Li, of his own accord, gave up to me his comfortable quarters of a sitting-room and cabin. Through many ups and downs of life for him in after years Li and I stayed friends ; he was not a strong character and he had lost his grip over the men, but that was largely due to Liu Poo-chin, the Commodore, who never supported him. So I pottered along and did what I could, worked up the signal system, the fleet organization—such as it was—and the complicated inwards of the ship ; and after all that was quite enough to do to start with. I was just a unit in the great organism of a battleship trying to do my job ; and, in between whiles, wondering what was going to happen.

I read my diary of the war, my reports and other papers for the first time since those days. It is instructive—to me—to compare the facts recorded with what is in my memory. My own doings are recorded only as incidental to what was going on ; personal experiences, however drastic, are barely touched on and in some cases entirely ignored. Yes, my diary is quite modest, for I was caught up in an organism of monstrous complexity. A large battleship and how it works is quite nicely complicated ; but that is not what is meant here. Comparatively that was very simple. The complexity lay in a vast muddle of diverse motives and ideals. Where there should have been homogeneity of purpose, there was a monstrously disordered epicyclic heterogeneity. In this machine—which included not only the fleet but all that was cognate to it, from the Viceroy to the Arsenal Director—the groups of wheels revolved to no general purpose but only to their own. The various groups engaged and disengaged when necessary, by some process of give-and-take which caused each other the least inconvenience. It was the antithesis of an ordered regimen from the standpoint of efficiency ; but it was disorder curiously ordered, and—in peace time—worked without a rattle, well greased with peculation, and with nepotism—that scum from the high virtues of their ancient sages.

Is all this a kind of double-dutch ? I will illustrate it by one example. For the ten-inch guns on the two battleships the fighting projectile was a powerful four calibre one ; the practice shell was two and a half calibre. Of the latter the magazines contained a stock of sorts. Of the former the flagship possessed a solitary one and her sister ship a pair. Now we may be sure that when the war broke out the Gunnery Lieutenants—both were good men—were much concerned at this and reminded the two Commodores ; these presumably told Ting, the Admiral, who in turn would requisition on the arsenal ; but when nothing happened no complaints were made. To appeal to the Viceroy—whose son-in-law Chang P'ei-lun was Director of the Arsenal and, though it was not known at the time, was at least flirting with the Japanese—would be contrary to all Chinese practice ; it would upset the whole machine, such as it was. The chief villains of the piece were three captains—Lin, Liu, and Fong ; but not Ting the Admiral. He stood on a pinnacle of fair fame—and responsibility for the sins of others.

As for the rest—Commanders, Lieutenants and Engineers

—they were just enmeshed in the machine. They would hardly know the fact, for the condition was normal to their circumstances. Then there were the men—the seamen and the stokers; fine stuff, mighty fine material, uncontaminated by the moral disease of Chinese officialdom; similar stuff to what the Golden Horde was made of when it swept over Eastern Europe. And in between were the warrant officers, partly one thing and partly the other.

The head of all this business was Li Hung-chang the Viceroy, who next to Li Lien-ying, the palace eunuch, was the right hand of the Empress Dowager. The Viceroy was a diplomat of world-wide fame; but to his countrymen—before the war—he was chiefly reputed as a great military and naval organizer. He was not nor could he be that; for the corruption, peculation and nepotism which infested his organizations had their fountain-head in himself, and to an extent which was exceptional even for a Chinese official. He was himself enmeshed in the national machine of organized inefficiency; to him also it was a normal condition, and any other, had it been indicated, would have been incomprehensible to him. Yet with all this he was without a doubt a fervent patriot; and there is an example of a Chinese puzzle.

But to me the greatest puzzle of the war was this: at the time the great military and naval review of 1893 was held, war already threatened. A year or so before, the Viceroy, at the instance of von Hanneken, had approved the ordering of a large supply of heavy shell for the battleships. That order was not executed owing to the obstruction of the notorious Chang P'ei-lun. But on the occasion of that review with the threat of war in the air, was the Viceroy reminded of the shortage? If not by Admiral Ting, why not by von Hanneken or Detring, who were present?

I must pass over particulars of the origin of the war; but briefly China and Japan exercised a joint suzerainty over Korea, and Japan was determined to push China out and later to annex the peninsula. It was Japan that was the aggressor both in the circumstances that led to war and in the first belligerent act. Now the Viceroy's game was merely bluff, not genuine defence ; his army and his navy were the equivalent of the terrifying masks which Eastern medieval soldiers wore to scare their enemy. He knew that if it came to actual blows he would stand but little chance ; but he carried on his bluff so far that withdrawal was impossible, and the Empress Dowager urged him on—probably much against his will. And Japan ' saw him,' as they say in poker.

Perhaps next to Li Hung-chang and the Imperial entourage came Detring as a factor in the war. He was a German and Customs Commissioner at Tientsin ; there he had consolidated himself as Li's adviser and thus become partly independent of Sir Robert Hart, who presumably did not like it. Detring thought he looked like Bismarck, and doubtless the fact affected him, for rather than looking like what we are, the tendency is to become what we think we look like ; but in his case the looking-glass belied him. He adopted a Bismarckian manner and had a certain grandeur of conception ; but obviously in such a matter as war he lacked the elements of judgment and execution, and played with it as a boy might play at being a Red Indian. He[1] had accompanied the Viceroy on the review, when war was in the air. A schoolboy would at once have thought of ammunition ; yet that elementary need was unattended to.

Let me revert now to that diary of mine. Plainly I did not know the picture I have sketched. I just floundered in the dark. The diary refers often to the difficulties that I found, to the wish I could do more ; but I also took it all for granted more or less ; and it was just as well I did so. At first as Co-Commander I had no authority at all, but later it increased and towards the end became more or less effective. From the beginning I took occasional initiatives outside my job ; in respect to fighting and executive work I was perhaps the only one in a position to do so, and I had a few adventures. These things bulk largely in my memory, but they did not bulk largely in my mind when they occurred, nor in the minds of others. I was not a central figure. Yes, I was quite modest in that diary, but all the same I find a letter in which I vigorously attack the *Times* correspondent for giving others credit for what I had done.

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[1] Regarding what I say about Detring, Sir Francis Aglen, the late Inspector-General of Customs, writes :—' Detring's swans were nearly always geese, but in many respects he was a big-minded man. If he erred in believing in the Chinese bubble he was in good company, for at the beginning Sir Robert Hart himself thought that China would win. I have no doubt that such advice as Detring gave to Li Hung-chang was sound enough ; and so awe-inspiring was Li's position that Detring was the only man who dared tell him unpalatable truths. But Detring had no sort of power in connection with naval or arsenal affairs and I do not think he can be saddled with responsibility for shortage of shell.'

And Dr. H. B. Morse, the historian of China, writes :—' What you say about Detring is about right. He had extraordinary diplomatic ability but enormous vanity. But he had nothing to do with ammunition ; in fact if he had tried to interfere in the matter he would have stirred a hornets nest and destroyed his usefulness.'

Neither of these views affects for me the picture I have drawn.

There were five foreigners in the fleet left over from the time of Captain Lang. In the flagship was Nicholls, an ex-British bluejacket, sound as a bell, and Albrecht, a German engineer. In the sister battleship *Chen Yuen* was Heckman, the German gunnery expert, a most capable person ; also Philo M'Giffin, an American navigation teacher, who was not quite all there. In another vessel was Purvis, an English engineer, a great favourite with us all.

Weihaiwei was our principal headquarters, and there we foreigners and the Chinese Captains gathered in the Club and discussed the question of fleet formation, of ramming and close quarters. There were yarns of the cruise to find the enemy which took place before I joined, and how they met a squadron in the dark and each fled from the other. There were whispers that the Commodore was most anxious not to meet the enemy. There was a young Captain, who had a lot to say about what he was going to do, and it was he who fled incontinently at the beginning of the Yalu battle.

The Admiral held a council of war and it was decided to fight in line ahead of sections—a section being mostly two sister ships in quarter line. I was rather disappointed at not being told to come, though I had no right to expect it. I wished I had a life-saving waistcoat, and I obtained a hypodermic syringe and a tube or two of morphia.

This is the place—before I come to my adventures—to explain about a feature of this book. There is, among a certain class of us, a convention forming the basis of our social intercourse, that we must not talk about ourselves except it be of a hand at bridge, a game of golf or such like ; we must never be earnest or enthusiastic except about such subjects ; and there are quite a lot of other things we may not do. This convention—whose genesis lies in the inhibitions of our schoolboy days—serves a very useful purpose. It scotches the tendency to mental swank ; it produces a plane of intercourse in which all enjoy equality, and so it makes our English social ways—for those within the ring fence—the pleasantest to the average mind in all the world.

But to carry that convention into books—though it may depend upon the book—is purposeless, for on the one hand if a writer bores us we can sling his book away, and on the other a human document is to most of us a thing of interest.

So in this book I discard that limitation and express myself as freely as I care to.

III

THE YALU BATTLE

1. THE FIGHT

It was the 17th September 1894. Off the mouth of the Yalu river—in the bight where the Korean Peninsula touches China—lay at anchor the Chinese fleet. Inside the mouth of the river were the transports, the disembarkation from which it was the fleet's object to cover. Not many miles distant on the Korean seaboard fighting was in progress between the soldiers of Japan and China. The little David of the islands had challenged and attacked the sick Goliath of the Continent.

On board the flagship—the battleship *Ting Yuen*—an air of cheerfulness pervaded most on that fine September morning. It cannot be said that hopes rose high even with the most sanguine of us; for was there not the damning fact of the shortage of projectiles, and, with the reputation he already possessed, what might not Liu Poo-chin—the Commodore—do or fail to do? But at all events there was a certainty now of something happening. The army had failed as it was bound to fail, and the stake of the fleet, so far delayed, was to be played. On it alone now lay the fate of China; on it, had we but known it, depended more: the epoch of a series of world events that led to the Great War.

The air of cheerfulness was mostly with the seamen. How brisk and smart they were; how lovingly they decorated their guns in various ways. No doubt about their eagerness could be felt. The officers in their cloth top-boots, baggy trousers and semi-foreign coats with the dragon stripes and the coloured buttons of their rank, were not so cheerful. They had the knowledge of how much we were handicapped, and there was, besides, that thing so indescribable, the enervating permeance of mandarinism. Yet there were really good men among them. Li Ting-sing, the Commander, in his quiet way was one ; Woo, the Flag-Lieutenant, nicknamed the ‘ Stork,’ great wag and American student ; Lieutenants Shin and Kao of the flagship ; Tsao, executive officer of our sister ship *Chen Yuen* ; Captain Tang, who went down in the *Chih Yuen*, and many others, whose names I now forget, were notably good officers in every way. But, all in all, it can be said that in fighting qualities the men of the deck and engine-room staffs were excellent, the warrant officers generally good, and the commissioned officers, with however many exceptions, least so ; and it was mandarinism that caused this difference in fighting value.

Ting, the Admiral, revered as a chief, respected and admired as an official and a friend, was praying to his gods for the success of his beloved country, and particularly that Liu Poo-chin, his Commodore and technical right hand, might not fail him ; for Ting with his lack of technical knowledge of ships was in effect a sort of First Lord of the Admiralty afloat.

Von Hanneken, the German Co-Admiral, walked the deck with thoughtful and anxious mien. He was a man of long and trusty service with the Chinese and of great capacity and daring ; his responsibility was felt the more by reason of the burlesque touch of his position, for he also was no sailor.

And Liu Poo-chin, the Commodore, Flag-Captain and virtual Admiral—suave, polished, clever, trained in the British Navy—was considering how, if the enemy were met, his skin could best be saved.[1]

Eight bells had struck, the boatswain had piped to dinner, and it was a roast pigeon that I sat down to in solitary state. Such is memory. An officer burst into the room. ‘ The Japanese are in sight, sir.’ On deck the crew poured up from below to look at the faint columns of smoke on the horizon. On the bridge, whither I hurried, were gathered the Admiral, the

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[1] It is with some degree of compunction that I let stand this and other definite statements of Liu Poo-chin’s mentality that of course can only be inferred ; but the inference is overpowering to me.

Commodore and von Hanneken. A brief consultation as to time available; again the pipe to dinner sounded and the men streamed down below once more. The Flag-Lieutenant stayed busy with his signals, and already the funnels of the fleet were belching out the heavy smoke of our Tongshan coal.

It took but little time to have that meal. Followed a very busy time for me—guns, magazines, projectiles, cartridges and fire precautions—all were in order, requiring only glancing at. No time for other things in that half-hour; but then I joined the party on the bridge. The anchor was being housed, the great ship throbbed slightly under the initial impulse of her engines; flags were fluttering aloft; black volumes trailed to leeward from the funnels of the fleet. And there to the southward was now not merely a cloud of smoke but a string of vessels emitting it. The moment was at hand; but new impressions could not claim attention then. Was everything all right? I looked around. Below me was the low and rounded summit of the conning-tower with its upper entrance; within it, close to that entrance, stood the Commodore alongside the steering quartermaster. On the forepart of the flying-bridge, which reached the fore-mast and lay partly over the diagonally placed pairs of ten-inch guns, stood the Admiral and von Hanneken. Not much longer must they stay there, for the flying-bridge was a half-permanent structure, which would be destroyed when the barbette guns were fired right ahead. What of the other vessels? Were they smartly taking station? My heart stopped beating. The *Chen Yuen* was on our quarter and hastening up as if she wished to get abeam; and the movements of the other vessels were similarly strange. The signal, which had ordered the disposition of the fleet, was at that moment coming down. A glance at it confirmed the fear I felt. The signal was for Line Abreast with leaders in the middle instead of Line Ahead of Sections, as had been decided by the Admiral in consultation with his captains.

Liu Poo-chin had made his coup. Here the result of the deep and anxious thought as to how, when we met the enemy, his skin could best be saved. With the battleships in the centre and the weakest vessels on the wings, the enemy would give the latter first attention ; it would be a respite for a time, for an hour perhaps or more ; it would avoid the immediate concentrating fire on his ship that would result from Line Ahead. Of course, an incomplete solution of his problem, but the best that he could do.

On the forepart of the flying-bridge stood the Admiral and von Hanneken. Obviously they had not, so far, realized the situation. Then it jumped to my mind that on me—junior and inexperienced as I was—depended action. What I advised would probably be done. Was the treacherous act to be amended or was it to be allowed to stand ? Quickly I made up my mind. The unexpected signal had already caused confusion in the fleet ; to alter it would make confusion worse confounded ; I feared disintegration. The lesser evil was to let the signal stand. Right or wrong, that was the view I took and acted on. I leapt the conning-tower and joined my chiefs. ‘ The Commodore has made the wrong signal ; it is Line Abreast, leaders in the middle ; look at the fleet ; but to alter it now would make confusion worse.’ And this view was adopted.

Meanwhile the line abreast formation was not completed. The weak wing vessels, feeling the tragedy of their position, hung back, and thus our fleet assumed a crescent shape. The fleets approached. They were perhaps ten thousand yards apart, and, moving as they were, the Japanese would cross ahead of us and fall on our weakest wing, the starboard one. Obviously a needed order was for our fleet to alter course together four points to starboard. It was by no means certain that it would bring our battleships in first contact with the enemy, but it would tend in that direction. The Commodore would never recommend the move, the Admiral and von Hanneken would hardly see the need ; and, whatever others thought, not one would dare to make suggestions. So once again I joined my chiefs and offered my advice, and again it was adopted. Von Hanneken moved aft to instruct the Flag-Lieutenant and remained there with him. Up went the signal ; the answering pennants flew from the several vessels ; and then down came our flags as the indication that the ships should alter course.

I stood above the entrance to the conning-tower below which was the Commodore, and waited for the movement of the helm. None came. ‘Commodore, the signal to alter course has been hauled down. If you do not port at once you will put the fleet in worse confusion.’ The Commodore then gave the order ‘Port,’ but in a lower voice said ‘Steady, steady,’ resulting in the movement being stopped. Sick with rage, I flung a curse at him, jumped the conning-tower top and ran to Ting. I hardly realized that he was now alone, and that I could not speak to him—I knew but little Chinese and he knew no English. I reached the Admiral’s side, and then a roar of sound and then oblivion; for Liu had given the order for the ten-inch barbette guns to fire, and Ting and I were standing on the flying-bridge immediately above them. That bridge was quite well named: it flew, and so did Ting and I. And that was how the Yalu battle opened.

The opposing fleets were not ill-matched. The Chinese had ten vessels large and small, including the two well-armoured battleships. On the Japanese side were twelve vessels, which were more modern than those of the Chinese and with a much greater fleet speed, but they included no battleships. In guns above six-inch the Chinese carried the heavier weight; in puns of six-inch and under, the Japanese had a great pregonderance.

Thus the Chinese fleet, so far as guns and armour were concerned, was at least equal to that of the enemy. Gunnery was fair; discipline left something to be desired, but the seamen could be counted on to fight well. The very serious factor was the outrageous lack of ammunition. For this lack there was reason to believe that not merely negligence, but actual treachery on the part of the Arsenal Directorate was to blame. This shortage of ammunition was without doubt known to the Japanese and a factor in their challenge. Another serious factor—as yet but partly known—was that Liu Poo-chin, the Commodore, on whom the Admiral must rely for technics, was a pathological coward, not merely in the face of danger but in scheming to avoid it at whatever cost. So without question we on the Chinese side were handicapped considerably.

The fight began at one o'clock. I have no first-hand evidence of the movements of the fleets ; it was quite impossible to gain impression of them. Moreover I was completely blind in one eye—for the day—as the result of that opening salvo. My view of what went on was limited to seeing—more or less continuously—through clouds of smoke and the splashing water caused by the rain of Japanese projectiles—one or more of the enemy vessels. From the beginning, for the reason given, the Chinese fleet was in a disordered crescent-shaped formation, with the two battleships *Ting Yuen* and *Chen Yuen* at its apex. Any possibility of remedying this condition was prevented by the destruction of all our signalling apparatus during the first half-hour under the concentrated fire of the Japanese. Throughout the fight the enemy was as orderly as in manœuvres ; in general it appears to have circled round us, we steaming on an inner circle. Gradually the vessels on that inner circle became, from one cause or the other, fewer and fewer. The Japanese lost no vessels, but several were severely damaged and left the scene. At about half-past five the enemy broke off the fight and steamed to the Korean coast, leaving the remnants of the Chinese fleet alone, and that remnant then proceeded to Port Arthur.

No authoritative reason for this discontinuance of the battle —there was about another hour of daylight—appears to have been made known, but a reasonable supposition is that the failure of the concentrated fire of the Japanese fleet over a period of four and a half hours to disable the two battleships was a large factor in the decision.

Of our fleet of ten but four were left, and one of these was gutted out by fire. Three were sunk by gunfire, including the *Chih Yuen* commanded by the gallant Tang, who, believing in close quarters, tried to ram the *Yoshino* and failed. With him sank poor Purvis. Two fled incontinently at the beginning of the fight ; another I cannot account for.

And as we turned and steamed away I tried to form a judgment on the situation. The breaking off of the battle by the enemy meant damage to their vessels ; they had no dock at hand ; almost certainly the crippled ones would beach on the Korean coast : could not our two battleships turn round and fall upon them in the morning ? We still had ammunition for another hour. It was the one and only chance that still remained for China, and I thought of that sound fighting rule, not to underestimate one's opponents' possible distress. If I made suggestions to that end would they be carried out ? Perhaps, for Ting would have agreed to anything we asked. Von Hanneken ? Perhaps, but I never knew. I kept my judgment to myself. A chance for something great, and I missed that chance from inability to rise above the strain and above the pain of concussion of the eyes, the violent spasms that accompanied it, and the rupture of both ear drums. Von Hanneken was wounded in the thigh, and Ting was badly crushed. There was also the factor of the Commodore ; and so we took defeat.

What was the explanation of the Commodore's act in opening fire while the Admiral and I were standing—well in sight—over the ten-inch guns ? I never knew and I never heard the thing discussed. Where the Admiral fell I do not know. His leg was crushed, and of course he was much shaken. He objected to being taken to a cabin, and sat upon the deck inside the superstructure where he could see men working and be seen by them.

By that opening salvo I was catapulted over the conning-tower for a distance of thirty feet or more. Consciousness was gained with sense of total blindness and the roar of battle. My coat had been blown off me except that my hands were still encased in the sleeves, now inside out. Dazedly the realization of the cause of my plight, and dazedly wonderment as to what would now happen to me. Then came the joy of returning sight in one eye, and the agony of recurrent spasms in the other—a splinter, of course, and a big one, but fumbling with my fingers failed to find it.

It was inside the superstructure, where I had been carried to and dumped—presumably as dead—that I found myself. Bruised and stiff but uninjured in limb I made my way to the armoured flat above the engine-room, which now served for sick-bay. It was very dark; but dull oil lamps. ‘ Doctor, I have a splinter in my eye, please pull it out.’ I was led by him to a lamp and told there was no splinter. ‘ It is too dark here, you cannot see; let us go amidships’—where through the shell gratings, like heavy boiler fire-bars, light filtered as well as falling debris and the roar of guns and bursting shell. ‘ Ah, you are scared, are you? Well, come again to your damned lamp. . . . What, no splinter? You lie, blast you. You cannot see, that ’s what ’s the matter.’

What follows is not a pretty story, but so sharp in detail does it linger in my mind that I risk the telling of it. Remember that I had lost my consciousness in raging anger at the cowardice of one; and now, as I believed, the cowardice of another stood in the way of relief from pain that was a very hell. Another foul spasm—and there that long and scraggy neck that spoke of opium. In frenzied pain and rage I flew at it, grasped it with both hands and tried to wring it, both struggling on the deck—a nightmare of madness and sheer futility, for my hands but slithered round that weak thin neck, which now seemed made of steel. Reason returned; relief at failure; shame for the attempt; apologies briefly worded and I tottered to the ladder whence I came. I could not mount it; men came to my assistance and pushed me up. Then came the realization of my weakness and how that weakness had preserved me from a beastly deed. Let it be said that there was no splinter; it was concussion that had caused the pain.

My replaced coat torn up the back, minus a cap, and one eye bandaged, I moved from group to group of gunners. There was little I could do but put on an air of fortitude I did not feel. Fear? Yes, fear. Not that cold oppressive fear that shivers up the spine and weighs down on the stomach; not that fear that paralyses limb and mind; and not that glorious fear which gives the undermind control and whets the wit and makes for sense of power. No, not these, but that minor fear where an effort must be made to cause the head and not the nerves to guide—for round about are the loathsome things of bloody war—with which the world is now but too familiar.

And in the conning-tower there brooded the only fear that rightly can be called obscene—the fear that hatches schemes for safety by the sacrifice of others That fear was felt by Liu Poo-chin.

I now met Woo, the Flag-Lieutenant, who was one of those who showed himself on deck though he might well have harboured in the conning-tower. Just then a man was killed close by and made a nasty mess. 'So this is civilization; this is what you foreigners are so keen to teach us; but let me tell you this: if I escape this day I shall be an advocate of arbitration.'

Later I felt as if a red-hot iron had touched my head. No blood; the skin was merely grazed, presumably by the smooth curved fragment of a bursting shell. That was the nearest approach to being wounded by the enemy, though half of those exposed were killed.

The sea for some short distance towards the enemy boiled with the turmoil of splashing shot, which ricochetting overhead made the fighting tops most undesirable spots where every one was killed. Through this spray and through the drifting smoke the enemy were seen at varying distances. The sights are on—one fires and waits the proper interval to see the splash perhaps; that splash means failure; if a hit is made, there is no sign except it be with ten-inch shell. One of those large projectiles—those solitary three—got home in the bowels of the *Matsushima* and wrecked but did not sink her. It was Heckman on the other battleship who claimed the credit of that shot.

At the barbettes the monster guns were belching flame and smoke and pumping out those sadly little practice shell. The crews were grimly cheerful. No slightest sign of fear among these men. One was wounded somewhat badly as I looked on and was told to go below and stay there. On the next visit to this gun the wounded man—bandaged and partly disabled—was busy with his work.

In the 'tween-decks cartridges were gathered for the light gun battery. I was passing by when a penetrating shell scattered the stock, and the working party fled expecting an explosion. Just then a little ammunition boy, who had been carrying with another a six-inch shell, stood frantic because his mate had run. With anxious eagerness he let me know as best he could that the after six-inch gun was short of shell. A charming smile of thanks, as for a favour granted, showed on his face when his mate's place was taken by myself. In later years, to my surprise, I found this story of the boy embodied in a poem.

At the barbette guns von Hanneken looked on. He, too, was one of those who stayed on deck among the men, although there was little he could do save giving an example ; and he had been somewhat badly wounded early in the fight. He saw his junior, and they talked. What had each seen ? What were the grounds for the statement that some Japanese had sunk ? The evidence was not enough to draw conclusions.

Poor Nicholls lay a mangled wreck. ' Pain ? No, no pain, but I know that I am finished ; for God's sake don't let me be taken to that awful flat. Let me die here in peace where I can see the fight. Now go about your job and don't mind me.' Thus spoke the British sailor. I concurred, but rigged a tourniquet and applied a pad ; and perhaps poor Nicholls had as good a chance on deck as in the flat. But slowly he sank as from time to time I visited him, and later had his pain and asked for morphia and got it ; and spoke about his daughter and what he wished about her : and so he died.

In a passage sat the Admiral. His injury was such he could not walk or stand ; but where he sat he saw men passing. He smiled at them and made remarks, which sent them on their way more cheerful. I came by, and in broken Chinese and in broken English we exchanged encouragement. Then with a hand-touch of sympathy, of deference and of admiration, I passed sadly on, thinking of the pathos of poor Ting's position.

Once or twice were grateful intermissions in the fight of ten or fifteen minutes, and I thought of half-time in a football match or, more, the calm that is in the middle of a storm ; but apart from these the fight went on from one to half-past five. At that time came what seemed to be another intermission. Ting's fleet—the little that was left of it—was steaming east, the enemy were all ahead of it. The distance increased ; the enemy were out of range. Then came the realization that it was not an intermission but the finish of the fight. Relief—unexpected and immense. Short time before the heavy load of something more than uncertainty. The dwindled numbers of the Chinese ships ; the question of the stock of shell and cartridges ; the continuous concentrated fire from a still considerable number of the enemy, gave no great promise of another day for us. And now not only surcease from the strain of danger but even hope of some success attained, for there were those who vouched for having seen some enemy vessels sink.

Von Hanneken and I celebrated the event with champagne and biscuits on the ladder leading to the bridge, and took note of the difference this implied between a fight on shore and one at sea.

Throughout the vast jazz music of the fight there ran for me a thread of Tennysonian rhythm, ' So all day long the noise of battle rolled '—perhaps a youthful sense of saga, but very potent ; for that rhythm remains persistent in my mind for all that happened on that day, and shapes the diction of this tale against my will.

Regarding the nature of my story there is this to be remembered. For one who fights among his fellows and for his country there are certain inhibitions in description. He is one of hundreds, thousands, millions, and he may not be able, for good reasons, to tell his tale in full ; but for the mere adventurer those inhibitions do not hold to the same degree. He stood alone or largely so, and what he did bulks largely in his eyes, and naturally so. The whole psychology is different. And let it be noted how very different are their circumstances—the one supported by a sense of duty and by devotion to his country, and surrounded by his kind ; but with no reward, except by some uncommon chance. The other alone, and with little to support him other than the spirit of adventure, and often feeling foolish for being where he is ; but, on the other hand, with prospects of reward perhaps out of all proportion to his services.

It remains to be added that the reason for the crescent-shaped formation of the Chinese fleet is here recorded for the first time.

2. AFTER THE BATTLE

After the Yalu battle the sad remnant of the fleet limped back—like a wounded animal—to its lair Port Arthur, where the inspecting of the ships and reporting on their damage devolved on me. The *Lai Yuen* was gutted out by fire. The *Tsi Yuen's* guns had been disabled by a sledge-hammer to serve as an excuse for her fleeing at the beginning of the battle. For this and for a previous act of cowardice Fong, her Captain, later had his head cut off. The other ships though riddled were quite serviceable, except for the shortage of their ammunition. But the first thing I did on arrival was to take precautions about M'Giffin. I knew he would become a Yalu-maniac and send telegrams galore, so I arranged for a censorate and was only just in time to stop a message to the world at large that we had won a glorious victory. M'Giffin was injured early in the fight by the blast of the ten-inch guns, while gallantly enough helping the fire brigade—for he was not an executive officer. The shock rendered him completely *hors de combat* ; but otherwise unwounded. That, however, did not prevent him from writing articles giving wondrous but entirely imaginary descriptions of what he had seen and done, and illustrations of himself with his many bandaged wounds. He lectured at an American staff college and succeeded in being taken quite seriously for a time. It was a curious case of partial brain affection ; but he was queer before the fight. Later he shot himself, poor chap.

We buried Nicholls with naval honours, and I read the burial service so as to serve for Purvis also. Then, because defeat had been accepted, because we knew that nothing more would happen for some time to come, and because we both were badly knocked about, von Hanneken and I proceeded to Tientsin.

Perhaps the real truth about the fight was hidden from the Throne, or perhaps the idea was to encourage us to further efforts ; but whatever was the reason, von Hanneken and I got the Order of the Peacock's Feather and the Double Dragon ; and thus was fulfilled my father's curious prophecy.

Now came a very wretched time for me. Both my ear drums were ruptured ; never again would I take part in a general conversation or adequately hear a concert ; my heart pumped like a water-ram and I thought it was affected, but it was not. Of course, it was my nerves—a minor form of shell-shock, but the word was not then known. I could say a lot about that foul complaint and the cruel foolishness of doctors in regard to it ; for there was I in that condition, unhelped by adequate advice, fighting against the hopelessness which is the most disgusting feature of the thing, and very miserable. I think I did not show it much ; but in that state I had to make decisions.

Von Hanneken had decided not to rejoin the fleet. I could not blame him ; he was a soldier, and now proposed to form a foreign officered battalion, which became nicknamed the 'Salvation Army.' He wanted me to be a Major in it. I did not know then that he thought, if I rejoined the fleet, it would reflect on him for not doing the same. Of course, I never thought of such a thing. It was twenty years later, after a growing coldness of manner on the rare occasions that I met him, that he suddenly and apropos of nothing blurted out that by rejoining I had not played the game with him, and that on me rested the responsibility for the loss of reputation with the Chinese that he had suffered from. It was most distressing, for I had the highest regard for him ; and of course it was most unjust.

I refused the Majorship because I felt my place was with the fleet. I felt it but did not think it, and there is a big difference between the two. There was not a dog's chance for the fleet. Weihaiwei would be attacked by an invasion of the peninsula ; the place would fall inevitably and our ships would either be destroyed or given up. This was not a mere opinion ; it was absolutely certain. On the other hand, there was that surly old Scotsman Howard—surly to me at all events—an engineer on shore, who would certainly stay till the bitter end ; there was my friend Kirk, the hospital doctor, who could not go away ; and now my friend Basse joined. I am describing the hesitation inspired by my condition of health ; in the end it came to that factor which must have been the basis of so many decisions. Should I regret it for ever if I did not ? There could only be one answer to that question.

Yet my doubt and hesitation was only in respect to returning of my own accord, for I find this forgotten entry in my diary : ' 11th November. In the evening von Hanneken sent for me and asked if I would rejoin the fleet ; he said that Ting and the Viceroy had asked whether I would, and Ting had promised that, if I returned, I should really be Executive officer. I told him in reply that I had always said that if I was wanted I would go, and that was still my answer.'

Detring was with von Hanneken, and both looked somewhat strained. There was silence for a moment and von Hanneken fiddled with his pencil as if he were choosing words. ' I think I ought to tell you that it has been decided to send M'Clure as Co-Admiral.' The words reached me as a shock, and I felt very angry. ' Ought to tell me ? You ought to have told me before I gave you my decision. To keep it back was a rotten thing to do. I doubt if I would have gone if I had known of this before ; but I have said I 'd go and I 'll not draw back.'

Detring glared at me and left the room in anger at my words, and slammed the door. Von Hanneken was tactful and explained that it was not his doing. Later in the day I met Detring in the street. He stopped me: ‘ You are a very foolish young man ; you do not realize where your interests lie.’—‘ Mr. Detring, if you want men who ’ll fight, you cannot expect them to be lambs as well.’ For a moment he looked astonished, then smiled, shook my hand heartily without another word, and thereafter our relationship was excellent.

The trouble was that M‘Clure was the skipper of a local tug-boat, and little more if nothing less. He had been a coasting captain and presumably was a man of some reputable family, for socially he was *persona grata* with the Detring family; but he was past middle age, and it was well known that at one time he had drunk heavily. The old sportsman doubtless jumped at the opportunity of this grand adventure ; but it was a cruel and stupid thing to send him on such a mission, and especially cruel to Ting. A relapse to drinking was a certainty ; we all knew that it must happen—all except Detring in his absurd Bismarckian rôle. What von Hanneken thought I never knew. It can be admitted that the difficulty of the situation was very great. Without a foreign Co-Admiral Ting’s head would be in danger. The choice lay apparently between M‘Clure and myself ; to appoint me offered serious difficulties—there was my youth and the fact that I was Commander of the Flagship. I should have loathed the absurdity of the post, yet it would have been the lesser evil of the two.

M‘Clure made no history good or bad. We should, under leadership, have made a better stand at Weihaiwei and got some credit out of it ; but nothing could have saved the situation. And presumably M‘Clure served his main purpose of saving Ting from execution.

Li Hung-chang’s modern army—German trained and skilled in goose-step and parades—was defeated in Korea ; and now one saw the pathetic sight of troops from neighbouring provinces marching to the front—troops in old-time uniforms, their rifles and their packs in carts. They had passed through a district where little birds, tied by the leg to a strip of bent bamboo, were sold ; and nearly every soldier carried one of these, and all had a fan stuck slant-wise in the back of the collar of their coats : and so they marched to war.

In a sense it was Li Hung-chang and not China that was fighting, and it may well have been that the majority of the Chinese people knew nothing of the war. But in the north they knew, of course, about it ; and at Newchwang, the northernmost treaty port in China, an old Major was considering the situation. He had charge of the fort commanding the entrance to the Liao river. The fort was old and dilapidated ; it was only made of mud, and its armament consisted of a few old cast-iron guns. But it was a fort and there was war ; so on his shoulders now rested great responsibilities ; quite plainly he must pull up his socks, eschew opium and keep his weather-eye lifting. Yet he hoped with earnestness that great issues would not fall on him for settlement. But luck was not his way ; for on the wide mud flat which lay between his fortress and the sea, on which hitherto he had rarely seen a soul, there now appeared each evening a group of foreigners, whose actions were undoubtedly mysterious and suspicious. He watched them with his telescope, and in the morning, when the place was clear, he scrutinized the little holes and the larger banks which they had made and the flags that they had left behind. Then he sat down and wrote a formal letter to the Taotai, reporting what had happened.

‘ He would have felt it his duty to report in any case, but doubly so in these very critical times. The foreigners had made small cylindrical holes in the ground and carefully and skilfully lined them with metal ; they had dug short trenches here and there—a most suspicious fact. They were each armed with various shaped weapons, with which they propelled white projectiles for long distances. The whole proceeding was most mysterious and he could form no opinion as to what it meant. He could not say for certain that these operations were connected with the war, but he begged the Taotai to instruct him what to do.’

On receipt of the letter, the Taotai sent it to the Senior Consul with a covering despatch referring to the war and the need for utmost caution. He concluded by saying that whatever might be the purpose of the operations on the mud flats, they must now be stopped. Would the Senior Consul please take note and the necessary action.

The Senior Consul was an Englishman. He would reply very formally and politely, but one can imagine the inner sense of what he wrote would be something like this :—' My dear Taotai, that old Major of yours is really rather a silly ass. What my co-nationals are doing is playing a well-known game which is played at every other port. It is usually done on grass, but as none exists here they are making the best they can of that deserted mud flat. They are merely amusing themselves ; that is all. I regret that permission was not first applied for and beg to ask it now ; but unless I hear further from you I propose to take no action.'

The Senior Consul's letter was now sent to the Major with instructions from the Taotai for a further report by the light of the information given in it. So once more the old man took his brush in hand and wrote those upright columns of complicated characters. ' I am an ignorant soldier, and this problem is beyond me. If these operations have no military significance, I have wondered whether they might not be connected with prospecting for minerals. It is the only suggestion I can make. As for the Senior Consul's so-called explanation, I have admitted that my ignorance disables me from saying what they are doing ; but it is not so great as to disable me from saying, quite positively and without a shadow of doubt about the matter, that they are not amusing themselves.'

IV

THE SIEGE OF WEIHAIWEI

1. THE BEGINNING

WEIHAIWEI was a secondary naval port inasmuch as it had no dry dock nor workshops for heavy repairs; but for training and administrative purposes it was so much more convenient than Port Arthur—with its constricted area and narrow entrance—that it was the one more used. The port takes its name from a small walled city which lies on the western extremity of a bay. This bay, some six miles wide and four miles deep, is open to the north-east except in so far as it is sheltered by Liukungtao Island which lies across its mouth. It was on this island that the naval establishments existed—the Admiral's offices and residence, a hospital and repairing shops for minor works. There also were the Yamens of the Taotais—civil administration officials—and of the General Commanding. A little town had come into existence—shops of all kinds, one kept by a German, and there was a foreign club to meet the needs of the score or so of foreigners that in one way or the other were connected with the place.

Both Liukungtao and the mainland, and also the islet Itau, which lay in the middle of the Eastern Entrance, were strongly fortified, this work having been done by von Hanneken a few years before. It was all quite up to date except for two curious omissions. The southern mainland forts were unprotected on their inland side, from which in a war attack could be expected, and on the island and elsewhere there was no provision for finding the range.

In the summer Weihaiwei is a delightful spot—it is a resort of Shanghai foreign residents to-day—but in the winter with blizzards from the north, when the shore was clad in snow and fringed with frozen slush, and communication between ship and shore was difficult, it was a very dreary place.

The country to the north and west of the city is mountainous, then comes a sweep of beach between the city and the site of the Southern forts situated on low cliffs with undulating land stretching to the mountains in the south.

When I rejoined the Flagship there I was very warmly welcomed. They thought something of the fact that the Yalu fight had not caused me to desert them,[1] and Liu Poo-chin, in spite of our past relationship, was very friendly and Ting was charming to me.

Of the Yalu battle there were but a few disjointed incidents to tell. In this Weihaiwei affair the case is very different. Here I am embarrassed by the plethora of material I possess, both in memory and in records. The Yalu battle was a single canvas as it were; Weihaiwei was a cinematograph fluttering for three months long.

I rejoined on the 19th November, and I was now supposed to be senior executive officer, with Li Ting-sing to help me; but in reality it never quite came to that, though I had considerable authority. Those two months before the Japanese attacked were very busy ones for me: re-stowing shell rooms, gauging projectiles and finding many misfits; getting water-tight doors in order; fire arrangements; cleaning the lower deck and flats, which had become very dirty. The ship had gone back badly since I left her at Port Arthur. Above all, the men were out of hand; they meant to fight, of that there was no doubt; but there was staleness between them and their officers. They obeyed such orders as they knew were needed for the working of the ship; there was nothing like a mutiny and the ship's police remained effective with some curious limitations, for certain orders were quite deliberately ignored by the men *en masse*. It was a condition that could not have existed elsewhere than in a Chinese ship.

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[1] I was the only foreigner who served at both the Yalu battle and the siege of Weihaiwei.

Li Ting-sing could not go to the flats where the men were quartered—it would be as much as his life was worth, he quite frankly stated ; control had gradually slipped from him, and to regain it now was impossible. My sympathies were strongly with him ; he was vastly distressed and very frank about his difficulties.

The job I had to tackle meant failure or success. There could be nothing in between, but I thought my chances good, for the men were keen as mustard for a fight and they knew their officers were not ; they wanted leadership and not mere orders. As I went down to that lower deck where the men were disobeying orders by making tea in their little charcoal stoves at the wrong time of the day, I think I felt a squirm of doubt. But such fear as I had was inspiring ; the thing was a great adventure. I judged it best and safest to take no one with me. I spoke to them in English, which many of the Petty Officers knew from the days of Lang. ‘ Now up you get on deck.’ The groups squatting round their stoves looked up with a somewhat doubtful scowling. I kicked over a stove and sent the burning charcoal flying ; kicked over three or four of them. I grinned cheerfully at most of them and scowled at those who showed resentment and cuffed their heads ; and all the time I emitted strings of English oaths—the only onomatopoeic language in the world, which all can understand. After the first impact and momentary hesitation they took it like a joke. A few stayed behind to pick up the burning charcoal. The rest scuttled up on deck, laughing at the entertainment, where Li took charge of them.

A quite important principle was involved in this affair. If I had taken Li or the Master-at-Arms with me, I should have had to deal with a crowd of one mentality in its resentment to those two. By going alone I dealt not with a crowd, but with an aggregate of individuals. There was no crowd hypnosis. What little there may have formed, within the week or so that I had been on board, would tend to be in my favour ; and so the thing came off. Thereafter discipline improved, though it never became anything to boast about.

There remained the factor of punishments; they were vindictive. Delinquents were slashed on the shoulders by swords or flogged so that one out of three died, and apart from other considerations these people, plus the crowd of malingerers—whom the Chinese doctors could not deal with—overflowed the sick-bay. I discussed the thing with Li; the sword slashing and the barbarous flogging had to be stopped; for otherwise I could not stay. Li and the Commodore agreed. Flogging was retained with greatly limited strokes and so as not to disable the men for more than a day or two, and the main punishment now adopted with my concurrence was that of chain-kneeling. Small chain was flaked on deck, the wretched culprit had to kneel on it and, if he squatted on his heels, the sentry pricked him with his bayonet in the tail. Half an hour of it was ample; it inflicted pain but not an injury.

The next problem was that of the large number of malingerers—a difficult proposition, for even a doctor may be in doubt about such cases. The solution of the problem was my own. I had them fallen in on deck, sent for a bucket of engine-room castor-oil—the most nauseating stuff imaginable—and forced each man to drink a half-tumbler of it. It was not that they would not drink this awful stuff, they simply could not; so it was administered as one gives medicine to a dog. Two days later the sick-bay was nearly empty.

With Li Ting-sing supporting me and on good terms with the Commodore, I had no trouble with the officers, with one solitary exception. I sent for a Lieutenant and he did not come, and on being sent for again, he came and was insolent. The matter was reported to the Admiral, who expressed great regret and said he would consider what should be done. Then he sent for me and asked what I advised. I recommended the full penalty of war time—death. Again he sent for me and in effect he said: ‘I made a mistake in asking your opinion; it would not be right for you to be both accuser and the judge; in such a case there can be nothing between death and an apology. Will you be satisfied with the latter in a public form?’ Thus that dear old man who tried so hard to do his duty. Of course I gladly acquiesced. In later years I had considerable dealings with that officer, but we never spoke of Weihaiwei.

On the 20th January the Japanese landed at the N.-E. Promontory some forty miles from Weihaiwei; but it was not until the 30th that they actually attacked us. I had always assumed that they would attack, but I had come to hope that they might not do so. There were no grounds for this hope, only a cause: I now knew with certainty that the forts on the mainland would not fight. They would be evacuated without a blow; and then, unless they were first destroyed, their heavy guns would be used against us. So I urged provision for the destruction of guns and magazines when evacuation took place. There was much opposition to this scheme, but eventually Ting agreed and placed the matter in my hands. Soon after, however, I undertook night patrol duty and handed over demolition work to Howie the American. With him were gunners Thomas and Walpole, Lieutenant Choo and some warrant officers and men. They did the work at a great risk, for on more than one occasion they were nearly murdered by the soldiers. Let us look ahead and see what happened as to this. The forts were evacuated one by one without a blow, but when the demolition party entered they found the wires cut and the batteries broken. There were traitors in those forts. I had anticipated it, and to Li, a *Ting Yuen's* gunner, who was the first to volunteer for demolition work, I explained the likelihood of treachery and the need to guard against it. 'You no wanchee fear. S'pose cuttee wire, I no savey what thing do for gun. But magazine b'long easy. I usee joss stick.' This means: 'You need not fear I won't do my job. If traitors cut the electric wires to the charges in the guns I don't know what I shall be able to do about that; but about the magazine the thing is easy. I 'll fire it with a joss stick.' But he did not; he fired it with the flash from a pistol; and there you have the real Chinese in the raw.

Howie was a man of extraordinary daring. The rest of us, I think, took risks because self-respect demanded that we should. Howie took them because he liked them. He had arrived at Weihaiwei with an American inventor of a scheme to destroy our opponents' vessels. A gunboat fitted like a watering cart was to sprinkle a special chemical on the surface of the sea; the enemy was somehow to be inveigled into coming on the treated area, and with the detonation of the film their ships would be destroyed. The stock of chemical for this mad scheme was burnt in Chefoo harbour, and doubtless at the instance of the Japanese. So that was the end of that affair; but Howie begged to stay and help in any way he could, and without pay.

When the Japanese landed at the Promontory, there was an exodus of those Chinese who considered they were entitled to leave. Among these, curiously enough, were the doctors, dressers and the rest of the hospital staff. Their argument was this: they were under the Taotai, the civil official, not under the General or the Admiral; they were civil servants. Had it been intended that they should be militant, other administrative arrangements would have been provided. Apparently no attempt was made to keep them.

Ting held a council of his Captains—I was never invited to these—and it was decided not to attempt to interfere with the enemy landing. The fleet was to be kept to defend the harbour. There were some reasons, of course, for this decision. The battleship *Chen Yuen* had some time before struck a rock and holed herself. The damage was merely patched by divers; we had no dock; she was not considered seaworthy. Of other vessels only *Ting Yuen*, *Ching Yuen*, *Tsi Yuen* and *Lai Yuen* could be called effective, and we had three small torpedo boats. These alone, well handled, should have been able to inflict serious damage among the transports, whatever might be the covering enemy fleet; but they would certainly be destroyed—except perhaps the *Ting Yuen*; and Weihaiwei would merely fall the quicker for the deed. Then there was the question of the future. The war was already lost; China would have had her drastic lesson; there was a central government in those days, and the authority of the vermilion pencil ran throughout the length of the great land. Surely the foundations of another fleet would be laid at once; but if all the officers were now killed there would be no nucleus for it. That was a reason of some potency; but all these reasons—good or bad—were but covering excuses. The fact is we did not want to fight. Even the desperate Howie did not urge the thing on me.

It is, however, recorded in my diary that I thought we ought to do it. I think if I had been responsible I should have felt the obligation. It would, if well done—a very doubtful if—have provided a minor epic that might prove more useful to the country, in the end, than that nucleus of officers. But I was not responsible; I was not called in council. Yet, had I wished, I could have got a hearing and pressed the matter. But I did not. Not only so; I heaved a sigh of relief when I heard we were going to funk it in the harbour; but as a set off against that confession let it be said that Howie and I with the four British bluejacket gunners at our back were prepared for any reasonable adventure that we controlled ourselves. We had a shot at two and failed—as will be told. All this about what we might have done but did not has no historic interest. The Yalu made history; Weihaiwei did not. I give the story merely as a human document.

Events moved quickly and were recorded fully in my diary, daily and even hourly; but yet, as already stated, there are curious hiatuses—the leaving out of all personal experiences which were not factors in the issue. The mutiny of the *Ting Yuen* is but faintly touched upon; once I nearly had my head cut off, but I can barely trace the date of that affair. There is a third adventure of which not one word is entered; but searching the recesses of my memory I find an explanation. The venture was a failure; there was more than annoyance in the matter; there was shame of sorts. I had got the Admiral's authority for independent action and had made a mess of it, so I threw it from my mind and made no entry of it. The episode was this:—When the council decided that the fleet should not go out, Howie and I talked the matter over. We thought something should be done to mark the event. There were three torpedo boats in order. If we each took one and put an English gunner in the other, we might have a shot at doing something with those transports. I put the thing to the Admiral and he, of course, agreed. The idea was that I should lead ; if I attacked, the other two would do the same ; if I concluded it was not good enough, we should all turn back. Signals were arranged for these two possibilities and our speed was fixed. So we started ; Gunner Mellows, I think, being in the third boat. Of course we had no lights, and the night was very dark. It was near the Promontory that I lost touch with my next-astern with Howie in her ; there may have been a mist ; presumably I signalled, and eventually slowed down. My memory is blank about these things. I only know that after a time I gave it up and turned back for Weihaiwei. One of our boats arrived before me, the other later ; we had all lost touch of one another. So that was that, and I made no entry of it in my diary, which is significant of how I felt about it.

2. THE ATTACK

The Japanese had landed on the 20th. For ten days we waited, practically inert ; just waited to be attacked. The diary says : '28th January. About 11 a.m. we received the news that the Japanese were nine miles from the easternmost of the mainland forts. Two enemy vessels outside now. Commodore Liu in a very feeble state. He has made himself actually ill with funk and is now in a state of nervous prostration, and will, of course, be worse than useless in a fight. He is talking of how he will commit suicide when the end comes ; the whole show centres on his own poor miserable self.'

'30th January. This morning at about 9.15 a.m. our forts began to open fire, but we could not see what it was about. It was 10 a.m. before we saw the enemy fleet outside the Eastern Entrance. I presume they are covering the advance of their troops. 12.30. Can see but little of what is going on. We are anchored at the West Entrance. . . . All the forts were in the hands of the enemy by about 1 p.m. Ting came on board about 1.30—I had been on shore to fetch him—and we weighed and proceeded over to the South side. We grounded on the bank but just slipped over. The Japanese were making use of one fort with two guns ; several of their shell went close to but did not hit us. We opened fire on it at about 4000 yards and kept it up for about two hours ; one gun was demolished and the fire of the other silenced, but I doubt if the latter was destroyed.'

For fourteen days, from the 30th January to the 13th February, we banged away at one another. The enemy squadrons bombarded our island forts ; they were not very venturesome —quite wisely so. Mostly, I think, they fired shrapnel. The Japanese just walked into our Southern forts, our soldiers having walked out some time before, and my diary does not blame the soldiers but only the generals. The demolition of the Southern forts by Howie and his party of English gunners and Chinese was not so bad, considering all their difficulties ; but it was not complete. First one gun, then a second, and after an interval of a week or so another two got under way, and pestered the island and our ships with big projectiles. One crashed through the armoured deck of the *Ching Yuen* and sank her ; that was in the latter days of the siege. We in our turn attacked those forts—our own—at comparatively short range, and generally were able to silence them for a time ; once we made a direct hit on a gun. But the *Ting Yuen* drew too much water for close fighting, and the other vessels were not venturesome.

The weather was bitter cold, 18 degrees of frost, and this delayed the Japanese advance. We could see them trudging round that snow-covered beach, little black specks against the white ; and now and then a speck stopped still, struck by our shrapnel. They reached the walled city and just walked in ; but they found our Western forts entirely demolished.

Shortly before the Japanese occupied the Western shore a signal was taken in from a field-gun battery on the heights above the Western forts. It was from Captain Sah Ping-chen to the Admiral asking, without comment, for instructions. He had delayed that message until the very last moment that evacuation of his post was possible. The other naval battery commanders did not wait for orders or ask permission ; but Sah always aimed at being quite correct in all he did. Later he became Commander-in-Chief, and I was much associated with him ; our K.C.M.G. was conferred on him, and for a time he was Premier of China.

We were now shut off from the outside world. What next ? Torpedo boat attacks seemed indicated ; but we had our booms and our gunboat patrols—my special job at night—and we might stave them off. In the meantime there was that nine-inch gun at Chaopeitsui fort that harassed us continually and caused many casualties on the island. Howie and I came to the conclusion that a landing-party could storm that fort and destroy the gun. The very boldness of the thing would be its best promise of success. I put the scheme in detail before the Admiral and he agreed. But Howie and I were to have no luck; for this venture also failed. Let my diary tell the story :—

'4th February 1895. I am sorry to say our scheme has come to nothing. The arrangement was for *Ching Yuen*, *Ping Yuen*, *Kwang Yuen*, two torpedo boats, and a hundred volunteers to be under my command—Howie to be in *Kwang Ping* and Mellows in charge of landing cutters. At dawn the rest of the fleet was to get under way and bombard closely the middle fort. In the meantime my three ships were to get outside the boom, approach the Chaopeitsui fort and silence the field-gun batteries in its neighbourhood. On a given signal Mellows with steam launches and with the hundred men were to close in, take me and Howie from our ships, then land and storm the fort, our ships covering us.'

There follows details of arrangements and of their mismanagement on the Flagship—a steam launch broke down, another boat was found to be defective, and so on. I, now in *Ching Yuen*, was tearing my soul out with impatience, especially as Howie in *Kwang Ping*, not knowing what was up, would think that I was causing the delay. In the meantime day had dawned, the enemy fleet appeared in sight and, to my disgust, I saw the men in the cutters alongside *Ting Yuen* disembarking. I signalled to Flag : 'Are we going to act according to agreement ?' After some time signal came back : 'Yes, delay caused by boats.' Eventually at about 7.30 the expedition started, but when we were just off the boom, the Flagship recalled us, as it thought the enemy fleet was going to attack. I signalled : 'I am willing and anxious to proceed according to original plan'; but the answer was in the negative.

Thus was a nice little enterprise completely spoiled, by general incompetence, perhaps ; but I wondered at the time if there were not something more than accident about it. For volunteers, not only seamen but stokers from all the ships gave in their names ; of warrant officers but very few, and those by personal persuasion. I did not ask for lieutenants, and none offered themselves.

That afternoon two more heavy guns from the South forts opened fire, and there appears this entry in the diary :—

'6 p.m. It had been arranged that another attempt to storm the fort take place at dawn to-morrow, and I was away arranging about volunteers from the different ships. When I got back, however, and heard about those two new guns, which commanded the only possible landing for the storming party, Howie and I talked it over and came to the conclusion that it could not be done. I have proposed that Observatory Island fort be instructed to try its hand to-morrow and, if that does not succeed, that Howie and I be each given a ship to bombard at close quarters.'

But these things were not to be, for that night the Flagship was torpedoed.

I did not go on patrol that night because of the arrangements made for the storming scheme at daybreak. The night was bright and clear, the moon set at 3.30. At 2 a.m. the enemy fleet were bombarding the Eastern forts ; it was heard in my dreams. I never got used to imminent danger, when being smashed up might occur at any second, but I had got quite used to danger some distance off ; so the knowledge that a torpedo attack was fairly sure to occur one night did not interfere at all with sleep. But now the 'Alert' sounded, as it had sounded many times before, and I went on deck. The diary says :—‘ Shortly after the moon had set, alarm rockets had gone up from the patrol boats near Itau. Presently firing took place from some of our ships. We ourselves opened fire, but at what object, if any, I could not see. “ Cease Firing ” was sounded to secure visibility, and then I saw a dark object about half a mile away. Firing began again and I ran up the standard compass erection to get a better view with my glasses. It was a torpedo boat coming end on for us on our port beam. When she was about 300 yards off, she turned hard-a-port ; I was not sure even then that she was not one of our own boats. As she turned I saw what seemed to be a shell bursting on her, but which actually was the cloud from her burst main steam-pipe. A very few seconds after she turned a dull thud and a quivering shock took place ; and within a second or two the bugler sounded “ Close watertight doors,” the great majority of which, however, were already closed.’

Follow details of the evidence of damage—leaking doors, a bulging bulkhead, the working of the pumps, conclusions as to the nature of the damage, reference to the absence of a collision mat.

‘ And so the sad business went on—the water gradually flowing from one compartment to the other. . . . As soon as we had been struck, Ting, who had no idea of how much damage had been done, gave orders for the ship to proceed to guard the East Entrance, and she got under way. When I knew the extent of the flooding, I told the Admiral that the ship could not float for long, and that he ought to beach her in such a way that her guns could still be used, and it should be done at once before she listed any more ; and this advice was followed.

At daybreak there were to be seen two enemy torpedo boats drifting in the harbour. One of them had four dead on board, all by scalding from the burst main steam-pipe ; they had done their job well and paid the price. I took steps to have the bodies guarded, and later they were buried, and with honours, I believe. The Admiral in the meantime had transferred his flag to *Chen Yuen*.

It was high water when we beached, and when the tide went down the vessel sank some distance in the mud. In the meantime too she gradually filled, the last fires being extinguished in the afternoon.

That next night on board was a very miserable time. The fact that all accommodation would be flooded out was realized too late for steps to get the men ashore, as we had no boats on board. The temperature was many degrees below freezing and it was blowing hard. My diary shows that I had been wet through up to my waist, and had taken off my socks to dry and lost them; and yet I got through that night without being damaged. I walked the superstructure, flapping my arms or alternately huddling up with M'Clure under a tarpaulin in the after turret. The men, I think, were not so very badly off; they could cuddle together like a lot of monkeys, but some were frost-bitten.

About 4 a.m. another torpedo attack took place. Above the din of gunfire we could hear—and feel—the explosion of torpedoes, and when daylight broke, a tragic sight appeared. Capsized, with her bilge showing above the water, was the poor *Lai Yuen*, and alongside the jetty the *Wei Yuen*, a lighter and a steam launch were sunk.

At dawn our steam pinnace came to us from the shore. I took that boat to find out what new disaster had happened in the night. I returned from that sad visit a little after eight, the hour which marks the beginning of the ceremonial day for flags and honours and that sort of thing. As we approached the ship I noticed something strange. That long sweep of unbulwarked upper deck which bordered the superstructure was strangely empty. At the gangway should have been—notwithstanding that the ship was wrecked—the boatswain, to pipe the side with four side boys in attendance; they were not there. But on the forepart of that deck, through the narrow gangway left by the barbette that bulged across it, there swarmed a crowd of men as bees from the exit of a hive. I saw that they were armed, but irregularly. I can bring back the picture now: the crowd moving slowly, as if to let the swarm gather from that narrow gangway; some slipping cartridges in their rifles ; some with Japanese swords, those razor-sharp Samurai weapons, and one of these, I saw, felt the edge with his left-hand thumb ; and I sensed the glowering worked-up anger of that crowd. Plainly it was rank mutiny and nothing else.

Let me do now what I could not then ; let me pause and consider what it meant. Yet there is little I can tell about it. When it was over, things moved so fast that there was no time nor inclination to bother about the why and wherefore ; but this much can be surmised. The Admiral had gone, and the crew were left on board a wreck with neither explanation nor means of leaving her, and the resulting misery of that night formed a very real grievance ; then at daylight they found that I, too, had gone, and so they got worked up. Their swarming aft just as I returned may have been an accident or not—I never knew.

The boat swept round to make the gangway. Already I think my subconscious mind had taken charge of me. Three thoughts occurred in quick succession—the imminence of the danger, blame of myself for having left the ship at such a time, and the fact that this was peculiarly my job. Afraid ? I must have been, but I have no recollection of it. Perhaps I had no time to be afraid ; I was excited and, at first, in doubt of what to do. I took a glance at the boat's crew to see, if possible, what they were thinking. They apparently took no interest and there was no change of expression on their enigmatic faces. We reached the gangway and I boarded. Then a bunch of officers came from a door in the superstructure. ' The men have mutinied. They will kill us all, and they will kill you first ; come inside.' Then came decision, not consciously thought out but in a flash. I walked towards that slow-moving threatening crowd and scanned the faces of those in front, and I found what I sought—a petty officer who spoke English. ' Mr. Su, tell the men I want to speak to them.' He turned round and translated what I said. The crowd ceased moving.

Now understand that what I then said to them—the lies I told—were not a matter of conscious thought. My words just came to me ; and the sentences were translated one by one.

'I know that you have been very badly treated.

'If English sailors had been treated the same way, they would have done the same thing.

'I have just been to see the Admiral.

'I have arranged with him that when the light guns have been landed, you will be sent ashore.'

What further lies I might have told cannot be said, for when that last sentence had been translated, I heard an ejaculation '*hau*,' meaning acquiescence, and I knew the show was saved.

In the meantime a bugler boy, from force of habit, was at my side. I turned to him at once on hearing '*hau*' and said 'Return arms'; and the bugle sounded. There was just a moment's hesitation in the crowd, then they turned and went like lambs.

I kept the bugler boy and thought carefully how long it would take to return the rifles to their racks, and allow for the stowing of those knives and things, but not for talking; then the bugle sounded 'Fall in,' and I handed over to Li the telling off of the men for the duty I had named.

Some time later the Admiral came on board and confirmed the arrangements which I had so irregularly made.[1]

I had bought a little house some time before, having an eye on my future with a new Chinese fleet, and early the next morning from my window I saw the beginning of a curious scene. To the eastward the enemy fleet was bombarding Itau fort. Our torpedo flotilla was under way and making full speed for the West Entrance. Our fleet was also under way and proceeding in the same direction. It looked as if they all were leaving port; but that was not the case. It was only the torpedo boats deserting and the ships trying to prevent them. They were fired at by our ships, by the soldiers from the shore, and by six large enemy vessels that happened to be outside that entrance; and they were all sunk, I believe, except the two large fast boats which got away, and one which was in such a hurry to leave the port that it tried to jump the boom and got stuck on it. I do not name the officers responsible for this disgraceful act.

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[1] This is the story as I wrote it before I read my very meagre diary. There I now find that M'Clure was in the boat with me, and that, when I boarded, he went to fetch the Admiral.

M'Clure followed the Admiral to the *Chen Yuen*, and somehow so did Howie. The island was now being heavily bombarded by four big guns from the Southern forts. It was plain that the end was coming quickly and there was anticipation of danger from the soldiers—from mutiny and running riot. It would be safer on the flagship, but I had no desire to be there. For one thing, there was Kirk and Howard on the island ; for another I foresaw that poor Ting would now become the centre of pressure about capitulation. It was my wish that all our ships should be destroyed—all in a bunch, so that their wrecks would least embarrass the future of the port—and that we should then capitulate. But it would be useless for me—with my lack of Chinese—to compete with the crowd surrounding Ting. Nor did I wish to be present at his suicide—the inevitable conclusion. That fine old man had already been degraded by Imperial Decree—stripped of his rank and honours. He had wished so much to be killed in action ; when we bombarded forts he stood exposed, praying for relief—and now this miserable end.

Kirk and I arranged that I should join him at the hospital, the whole staff of which had left when the siege began. A certain amount of volunteer assistance was given by men who thought they were safer there ; but during the seven days I worked with Kirk, there were only the pair of us and my servant with occasional temporary help from stretcher-bearers. When, towards the end of that week, the bombardment was at its height, we were amputating all day long. We had no anaesthetics. Kirk taught me how to pick up arteries and place a pad ; he did the cutting and the sawing and I did the rest. The pile of limbs as I stacked them—for the ground was frozen hard—grew in height. Ashamed of that ghastly heap when we capitulated, I gathered all the bandages, doused them with a tin of kerosene, and so cremated it.

I had joined Kirk the day after the desertion of the *Ting Yuen*. At eight o'clock that night commenced a great muddle of mutinous conditions, which I never disentangled. It looked like the very end, but yet the thing blew over. The diary says :—

'At 7 p.m. we heard that the sailors had mutinied and come on shore; about 8 p.m. that the soldiers had mutinied and gone on board the ships.'

'8th February. An anxious night came to an end at last. The mutiny of the soldiers was a serious affair. They disabled their guns (afterwards I found this was not the case) and said they would fight no more. They crowded down the jetty, took charge of boats, and some boarded the *Chen Yuen*, demanding that they be taken away. That the soldiers' threat to fight no more was real, we all believed; that in those circumstances the Japanese would storm the place to-morrow, was considered a dead certainty . . . but they would not yield themselves; they would resist the Japanese on landing and another Port Arthur slaughter would take place. The idea of Japanese giving quarter is not regarded as possible by the Chinese; even the officers seem to have grave doubts about it.'

It was in these circumstances that Kirk, Schnell—a gunnery expert attached to the Chinese army—and I consulted with the two Taotais—the civil officials—on the island, and as a result at 2 a.m. Schnell and I went off to see the Admiral to explain the situation to him, to advise that we fight as long as possible, but that, if the soldiers would not fight, capitulation was the proper step. I did not like the job, and what Schnell —fluent in Chinese—said I did not know. There was as usual no privacy in that talk with Ting. Servants brought tea and stayed deliberately to hear; the skylight was fringed with the heads of sailors, but from my standpoint it did not matter; the views I had authorized Schnell to express were such as were desirable for all to hear.

Ting declared at first that capitulation was impossible; but later he said he could arrange it by committing suicide, and so save the lives of many. Schnell's part in this interview was later strongly criticized ; I might have been included—however unfairly—but I do not think I was.

All that night the chaos on shore continued, the soldiers roaming about firing their rifles in the air and their big guns at random. But the next morning—quite inexplicably to me—the turmoil ceased. Sentries were no longer at their posts ; officers were discarded from the forts and camps, but otherwise everything went on as usual and the guns were gaily banging away. It was during this last week that the forts fought most vigorously, and sustained by far the greatest casualties. What brought about this sudden and seemingly miraculous change I never knew ; but I sensed their attitude as being : ‘ We fought before because we had to ; we are fighting now because we wish to.’ It was a Chinese show, and we need not hope to understand it.

So Kirk worked at the hospital, with me as his amateur assistant. I have said we had no anaesthetics ; but the operations were effected so soon after the injury, that shock greatly mitigated pain. But even allowing for this, the men showed either great endurance or lack of sensitiveness—and vast vitality. A case was being taken to the mortuary as having died on the way. His arm was shot from the shoulder, a curiously neat removal, and he was bled white. I had a doubt about the case and took it to a ward ; we were very busy at the time and I made no attempt to trim the wound—just a pad and nothing more—and that man recovered.

Liu, the Commodore, had boasted mournfully that he was bound by Chinese practice—in spite of his Western education—to commit suicide if he lost his ship ; and now his ship was lost. His officers gave him a day or two to settle his affairs ; then waited on him and expressed the hope that he would give them due notice, so that they could pay their last respects to him. In this wise the poor wretch was practically forced to take the dose of opium, but immediately afterwards sent for Kirk. This happened several times, but on the last occasion Kirk had begun an amputation. ‘ Tyler, can you finish this ? ’ ‘I have no intention of trying to; your first duty is to this man;

go to the Commodore when you have finished, but not before.' This time Kirk arrived too late, and Liu's troubles were over.

The diary tells of how certain naval officers came to us for poison and how we slanged them for their cowardice. Two of these later became Commanders-in-Chief, another the Minister of the Navy, and with one of them in later years I was closely associated and I grew to have a great regard for him.

Now comes the story of how I nearly had my head cut off. It is given as I remember it—as I wrote it before I read my diary; and it is not the sort of thing one would forget. Yet one detail is in disagreement with the diary. The record says we saw the decapitated seamen two days before we had the affair with the executioners, while I distinctly remember that the two things happened on the same day. There may, however, have been two sets of killing. Again, my diary makes no mention of the motives of those executioners; but there is no significance in that; it is just the sort of thing I was always leaving out. But in view of those dates it seems well to add that my memory of the motives stated *may* be no more than a memory of a reasonable hypothesis formed at the time.

When I first went to the hospital we were given a guard of two seamen, but they did not like the job and deserted us. Schnell thought it was not safe for us to pass Chang's camp on the way to the hospital; but we had no choice and were not molested. We went unarmed to show a confidence which I, for one, did not quite feel. I was inclined to hurry past that camp with its sheepskin-coated soldiers as, when a boy, I had hurried past a gypsy's encampment in the dark. On the 12th February we paid a visit to the settlement. By that date many things had happened not yet told. Ting was dead; capitulation was in train; there was a recrudescence of unrest among the soldiers and the sailors, and recriminations between the two. Before we reached the camp our path turned sharply, and in that turning lay the beheaded bodies of four seamen from the fleet. We wondered what it meant and passed on; we discussed it very little and were rather silent on that walk. At the camp there was an unusual number of soldiers about. We did not notice any difference from their ordinary attitude; yet I felt a special wish to hurry, as I thought of those cut-off heads. Let me make an explanation now of what they really meant; it will make what happened to us later more easy to understand. It seems that the previous night the soldiers had found on the hill-top two naval signalmen flashing signals to the enemy. They dragged them to the camp and there cut off their heads. We can imagine the hubbub that resulted and the frenzied speeches. Capitulation! Port Arthur again and promiscuous slaughter! Better die fighting than be killed like pigs! There were no officers; it is likely that the two executioners of the camp, fresh from the killing, stood out as leaders; and that, encircled by their comrades, they danced that dance which a few years later in the Boxer time we became familiar with—a mad dance to work up rage and courage; weird fantastic steps and posturing, and the slashing of their bloody swords in mimic slaughter. Then their judgment: 'We 'll kill the first six naval men we meet.' A pause, and then bombastically, 'and whether they be foreigners or not.' Now they had killed those four; we passed the camp, and nothing happened. Again let us imagine the explanation. With their frenzy ended, and sated with their recent killing, they thought, when they saw us coming, of what we had done for them, and what a pity it was that punishment should fall on us. So they hesitated; but they had passed their word and to go back on it would mean a loss of face—a very potent thing; and in the absence of other leaders, there was no one to help them out of their predicament. Thus it would have to happen when we returned, but they did not like the job and took to drink to fortify themselves. The others did not wish us killed, but it was not their part to interfere, and they would look on as at a rather tragic entertainment. Kirk and I of course knew nothing of this at the time.

In due course we returned; and there was the camp. Kirk, the phlegmatic, noticed nothing. I saw the unusual crowd on the corner of the ramparts facing our approach and on the road, as for some spectacle, but refrained from saying anything.

Then two soldiers in their sheepskin robes met us and turned back with us, one on either side ; and they jabbered to us in their language, which neither of us understood. They hustled us a bit, not so much threateningly as rudely. ‘ Keep smiling, Kirk. I don’t like the look of this.’ Kirk replied, ‘ Oh, that ’s all right, they ’re only drunk.’ So far it was just a disagreeable experience ; I did not associate it with the crowd nor with the bodies we had seen. A moment later my man dropped behind, and I looked over my shoulder to see what he was doing. His head was down, one hand held open the left side of his robe, the other was drawing a sword from its hiding place. It was one that could not be mistaken ; it did not taper to a point ; it expanded to a wide and heavy end ; it was the sword designed for cutting heads : the men were executioners. Then across my mind there flashed the truth. The bodies, the expectant crowd, the drunken executioners, half-hearted for their job and looking for some incentive from us ; a resentful push would have met the case : but now the man who had dropped behind meant business.

These seconds—not minutes, as I believed until correction came—were full of lightning thoughts, and left on my mind a picture of the scene that was indelible for years. In front, the camp ; behind, that executioner ; on the left, the rough steep hillside scored with small ravines ; and on the right, ravines again, and then the sea fringed with frozen slush. To fight, impossible ; to flee, impossible ; and inspiration would not come. Kirk in ignorance of what was doing worked off a Chinese jocular remark he knew on the other man. To warn him would but have only precipitated matters. That cold creep up the back began when I saw that sword ; it stayed and crept up to my hair roots ; I was conscious of my scalp as every moment I expected a swipe across the neck. I prayed for the miracle that alone could save us, and which I thought any action on my part would make impossible.

And the miracle occurred. From a sunken path, leading up from the sea, appeared the discarded Colonel of the Fort in uniform. I saw Kirk’s man skedaddle up the hill, then looking round I found that my friend had also run. The Colonel’s influence on them, although he had been discarded; the excuse, perhaps, to save their face while giving up a job which they disliked; the sudden change from tragedy to farce—as in the *Ting Yuen's* mutiny—was typically Chinese.

Now comes a curious feature in this story—as a story. Kirk had had no idea that anything had happened except a hustling by a drunken soldier. The Colonel accompanied us past the camp, and it was only when he left that I told Kirk what I had seen. For him to believe, on the evidence of my story of that sword, that within the last few minutes he had nearly had his head cut off, was too much for the imagination of my phlegmatic friend. He suggested that my nerves were still affected by the Yalu battle.

Something happened later which has a bearing on the tale. Three years passed by before I re-entered Weihaiwei en route to another port. The scene—the island, the coast, the heights—was full of reminiscences; and the *Ting Yuen's* conning-tower was still awash; but above all the memory of that roadway past the camp. No vague recollection here, but a sharp-cut picture like a small-stop photograph—the silhouette of the hills against the sky, the individual gullies on right and left, a rock there, a shrub there, and the shape of each. Was this mental picture of such detail a true one, or had imagination played a part in forming it? We were anchoring for an hour, so I landed and once more walked that path. My mental picture was correct in every detail; and yet there was something very strange. What was it? It was the scale. My memory had played a curious prank on me. It had not doubled distances or trebled them; it had increased them about tenfold. So my memory of that period of great suspense, which I had thought of as a minute or two, could not have been more than about ten seconds; evidence enough of the stress that I had experienced.

During that week at the hospital I have little record of what went on. On the 8th the *Ching Yuen* was sunk by a nine-inch shell which struck her at the waterline and penetrated the armoured deck. Bombardment went on more or less continually in day-time and sometimes at night. There were no more torpedo attacks—at all events no effective ones ; evidently they had not liked the loss of their two boats expended in sinking the *Ting Yuen*.

But now the end was really coming. In the early hours of the 12th Admiral Ting committed suicide. I have no direct evidence of what happened then—only impressions of what I gathered from rumour and Schnell's story, which was later published.

It seems that when Ting died, M'Clure and Howie and some Chinese officers came on shore to Taotai Niu's house and there found Schnell. Howie took the lead and drafted a capitulation in the name of Admiral Ting. It was translated and sealed with Ting's seal. According to Schnell it read :—
'Admiral Ting to Admiral Ito. To prevent unnecessary bloodshed I beg to surrender my fleet and harbour to Your Excellency, and ask in return free evacuation for foreign and Chinese officers and men.' The *Chen Tung*, with white flag flying, took the letter to the Japanese.

I accept that story of Schnell because of its seeming probability. Yet my diary contains evidence that is apparently, but not necessarily, contradictory, for Howie may not have wished to tell me the actual details :—

'I had a yarn with Howie (*i.e.* after the letter had been sent). He is against capitulation of any sort and wants the soldiers and sailors to fight their way to Chefoo after destroying the fleet. This is no doubt an excellent plan in theory, but quite impossible in practice. Schnell says Howie has had a great deal too much to say about what ought to be done.'. . . I sent a chit to M'Clure saying I would like to see him. He came to Kirk's house and we had a yarn. I asked him whether I could be of any use to him in this crisis. He said I should be of most use where I was, with Kirk. He therefore does not want my advice or help and, of course, there is nothing for me to do in the matter. I asked him what terms had been proposed. He told me that the Chinese offered to give up ships and island intact, if the Japanese would allow our troops and sailors to march to Chefoo. It seems to me that this is an absurd proposition. We ought to have destroyed the fleet. . . . I am very distressed about poor old Ting. I look upon his suicide not as a cowardly way out of his difficulties, but as a sacrifice of his life for the purpose of saving the lives of others. He was a really brave man and, in this respect, miles above any other Chinese here.'

3. THE CAPITULATION

Admiral Ito's reply to the capitulating letter, falsely purporting to come from Ting, was a model of chivalrous courtesy. It was written in English, and dated the 12th February 1895 :—

'I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and to inform you that I accept the proposal which you have made to me. Accordingly I shall take possession to-morrow of all your ships, forts and other materials of war, which are left in your hands. As to the honours and other minor conditions, I shall be glad to make arrangements with you to-morrow at the time when I shall receive a decisive answer to this my present letter. When the above-mentioned materials of war have been delivered up to me, I shall be willing to make one of my ships conduct the persons mentioned in your letter, including yourself, to a place convenient to both parties in perfect security.

'But were I to state to you my personal views and feelings, I would beckon you, as I had done so in my last letter, to come over to our side and wait in my country until the termination of the present war. Not only for your own safety but also for the future interests of your country I consider it far more preferable that you would render yourself to my country where you are sure to be treated with care and attention.

'However, if it be your intention to regain your country, I leave it entirely to your choice.

'As regards your desire to make the Admiral Commander-in-Chief of the British fleet act as guarantee on your behalf, I deem it unnecessary. It is on your military honour that I place my confidence.

‘In conclusion let me inform you that I shall be waiting for your answer to my present letter till 10 o’clock to-morrow morning.’

The expression ‘Come over to our side’ obviously merely meant that Ting should on capitulation take refuge with Ito in order to save his head and his services to his country for the future. I have no knowledge what answer was sent to this, but my diary contains a copy of a second letter from Admiral Ito dated the 13th February and addressed to ‘The Officer representing the Chinese Fleet,’ which ended :—

‘In my last letter to the lamented Admiral Ting it was said as to the honours and other minor considerations, I shall be glad to make arrangements with you to-morrow, and now that he is dead those minor considerations have to be arranged with somebody who can deal with us in his stead. It is my express wish that the said officer, who is to come to this our flagship for the above purpose, be a Chinese—not a foreign—officer, and be it understood that I am willing to receive him with honour.’

These letters give me cause for thought. They are manifestations of the highest form of chivalrous sentiment. Ting, of course, was a personal friend of Ito, but that should not detract in any way from one’s admiration for the behaviour of that gallant nation on this occasion. Yet, in my later life, no one passed more vigorous criticism and condemnation on their policy in China than myself.

On the 16th two Japanese vessels entered and anchored well to the southward; then a torpedo boat came with instructions that all foreign officers should proceed at once on board the *Matsushima*. Kirk and I considered this. We anticipated that foreigners would be treated as mere adventurers and with some minor indignities, for, with Kirk’s exception, we could hardly expect otherwise. The others would not feel it in the same degree that we should, so we decided not to go and went to the hill-top to avoid being taken off.

The next day the Japanese fleet came in by the Western

Entrance, and as we watched the scene from some vantage point on the road, a party of Japanese officers approached us. I understood they were members of Admiral Ito's staff and perhaps included Togo. We mutually saluted and a conversation not recorded, but clearly remembered, ensued :—

'You are Captain Tyler and you are Dr. Kirk ? It is a nice view you have here'; and I replied, with a movement of my hand to the entering fleet, 'Yes, and a very interesting one historically.' The officer smiled and nodded acquiescence, then thought a bit and said : 'You two gentlemen were not on board the *Matsushima* yesterday. I presume I can consider your parole as given ?'—'Yes, please,' and the party saluted and passed on. Such very perfect manners !

There is not much more to tell of Weihaiwei. We were given the *Kwangchi*—an old corvette—to take us to Chefoo. Such gear as we could carry, or get carried, we put on board. Small parties of Japanese, in charge of officers, were roaming around, and some were quietly and in an orderly manner looting those European houses already deserted by their owners. At no time, says the diary, did I experience the slightest rudeness or roughness from them.

So we reached Chefoo, and for us the war was over, though there were still fag-ends of it to be dealt with by me. My diary is full of details—of my relations with M'Clure ; of the gunners and their interests ; of our wounded in the hospital. Says the diary : 'Went out with Kirk to the hospital to help him cut off an arm.'

Then Tientsin, where I was very well received by von Hanneken, Detring and the community. I was asked if I wished to see the Viceroy. I could see no useful purpose in doing so. There was nothing I could tell him at this stage that would not better be left unsaid. A settlement of the claims of the foreign officers was placed in my hands, an onerous and disagreeable task which left me in bitter enmity with Lo Feng-loh, the Naval Secretary, and made me wonder what effect that enmity might have on my future.

Now for something of the personnel with whom I served. Of Ting Ju-chang—the Admiral—I have said enough to show my admiration and devotion, an admiration shared by all who knew him; but I will add this extract from the diary:—'He has, since the attack on this place was made, always been in the place of most danger. When we bombarded the South forts he was always on the bridge, while the Commodore was slinking in the conning-tower. He was, of course, on board when the *Ting Yuen* was torpedoed. Since then, when there was any fighting, he has always been in the *Ching Yuen* in the foremost place; and to-day he was on board of her when she was sunk.' Also I add this little story:—A foreign officer posed on somewhat meagre grounds as an expert in torpedo work, and was detailed to inspect torpedo boats. Fiddling about with a bow tube, when the boat was under way, he accidentally released the torpedo, which, sliding half-way out, was bent and ruined by the pressure of the water. Ting had the officer before him and said: 'The loss of a torpedo does not matter much, for unfortunately I see no chance of using them; but what I do not like about this affair is your pretence to be an expert. Here am I Admiral of the Fleet. Do I pretend? Do I assume to know anything about a ship or navigation? You know I do not; so take an example from me and pretend no more.'

The rich timbre of Kirk's brogue still echoes in my ears—the most genial person I have ever known and the very best companion. He laughed and whistled as he cut and sawed those arms and legs, and, in response, even the patient sometimes smiled—and I repeat we had no anaesthetics. We were exactly complementary, I think. What I lacked he had, and vice versa; so in later days we could go a houseboat trip together and never bore each other.

Old Howard was engineer in charge of the workshops. Of the shore staff only he and Kirk and Schnell stuck to the Chinese cause. He disapproved of me because I wore uniform;

it had not been done since the time of Captain Lang ; we were all mere advisers and my attempt to be something different was just foolishness. I am glad that towards the end he unbent to me, for I had a great regard for him ; one could not have anything else. He was so crippled with rheumatism that often he could not walk, and he must have been more or less constantly in pain ; but he never gave in ; he was carried to his shops and superintended from his chair. When the guns on Itau Island were damaged, he was taken there in a litter and his boat was under heavy fire on the way. At the time of the beginning of the siege and the general exodus, I told Howard I thought he ought to go ; he retorted by telling me that I ought to go to hell. A very gallant man was Howard.

Thomas, Clarkeson and Walpole were ex-bluejackets from the Customs service and Mellows another from the Shanghai police. My report says :—‘ The Itau garrison came over to Liukungtao to-day, including the gunners Thomas, Walpole and Clarkeson. The behaviour of these men has been splendid. . . . Not only their daring, but their quietness, sobriety, and unassuming manner point them out as exceptional men. Mellows, the gunner of the *Ting Yuen*, is included in this appreciation.’

Basse—a Prussian and a great friend of mine—had been my shipmate in the Customs cruisers, and when I volunteered he followed suit ; but he joined up too late to be in the Yalu battle. At the beginning of the siege of Weihaiwei he was on a torpedo boat that was run down by a cruiser ; fearing an explosion of the boiler, he jumped overboard, got mixed up with the propellers, was miraculously not killed but was badly injured for a time. He wished to stay, but I pulled strings with the Admiral and he was sent away. I mention Basse because, although his venture seemed so great a failure, it led him eventually to an extraordinary career ; and while, so far, I had been the leader of the two, it was he who later exercised an influence on my life that was greater than that of any other man.

And now about M'Clure. It will be seen later that I let pass an opportunity to write a history of the naval war because in doing so I should be unable to avoid the truth about him. Thirty years and more have now passed; he was a public character—to however small a public—and in a sense he was a minor character in history. There were those four British bluejackets in that serio-comedy, who played their various parts so perfectly in every way; and there were others who did their best to play the game. Are they to go entirely unsung, while that gay old sportsman's memory scoops in all the little credit with his comic part—for that is what it comes to? I could not tell the story merely for the sake of telling it—not even for its humour. But it is involved with what happened at Weihaiwei; for if Ting had had a backing such as von Hanneken, for example, could have given him, the siege of Weihaiwei might have gone down to history as a minor epic. It is not pleasant to feel that M'Clure's death—some years ago—now makes it possible for me to speak, yet so, in such cases, it must always be.[1]

The stress and strain caused him to revert to drink—of course not all the time, but particularly at moments of crises in the siege—when decisions were most needed. I will not say how much or when and how, and all I did about it. Apart from stress and strain, the appointment as Co-Admiral went to the head of this old tug-boat skipper. The sword, the uniform, the piping of the side, the bugled Admiral's salute were as strong wine to him; he lived in a glamour of this miraculous thing that had happened to him. He seemed quite happy and pleased with himself—never a word of remorse or shame for what he did or did not do,—and all the time he beamed with good nature; even to me—against whom he had an unforgivable grievance—his manner was never anything but cordial. To say that he had no evil or meanness in him does not go nearly far enough. He was a dear old soul in every way, apart from that one failing, the manifestations of which, however, were tragically and comically shocking; he was plucky enough and stood fire with the best of us. In spite of his grievance against me, I never heard of his accusing me of anything worse than insubordination and impertinence—the latter a rather curious touch. One feels sorry for any one in trouble and unhappy; but in that sense there was no occasion to feel sorry for M'Clure. He was a serio-comic tragedy; and the more one sees the comic side, the better for his memory.

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[1] I have a letter from the late Captain W. M'Clure, a nephew of the 'Admiral,' in which he says that he knew his uncle's way—he was out in China at the time; I was not to spoil my book out of consideration for his family. But he pointed out that his uncle was a great old sportsman, and that it could be claimed that he saved the Chinese Admiral's head; so would I let him down as easily as possible. A very charming letter!

His tug-boat was at Taku, the seaport of Tientsin. Cooper, the Mate, had orders to have steam for proceeding to Weihaiwei. M'Clure arrived; he had not yet donned his uniform, of course. 'Well, John,' said Cooper in his customary manner with his Captain, 'what 's the news?' John drew himself up with such dignity as he could: 'Allow me to inform you, Captain Cooper,' and he paused to let this new title for the Mate soak in, 'that evidently you are unaware whom you are addressing. Let me make you acquainted with the fact that I am the Admiral of the Chinese fleet; this is my despatch vessel; you are, for the time being, my Flag-Captain. Get off my quarterdeck and get the vessel under way.'

There came the landing of the Japanese at the Promontory and a decision to be taken; then the capture of our South forts and bold action needed; and the little use M'Clure might have been he was not. It was then I spoke to Ting about it and asked him to get Kirk to put M'Clure on the sick-list; but it was not done. So I spoke to him myself, and warned him that if he did not at once pull himself together, I should report him to Tientsin. I spoke respectfully, with lots of honorifics —'Sir' and 'Admiral'—and the next day sent my cypher telegram to beg for his removal; I showed him that telegram as soon as he could read it. Then I wrote my justification for the extraordinary step I had taken, and sent it to von Hanneken with a tender of my resignation. Ting knew and privately approved this step, and he came to my cabin, told me he had tried and failed to get M'Clure to go quietly to Chefoo, and asked what I recommended. So we sent for Kirk and got him to put the Co-Admiral on the sick-list ; he made no difficulty about going on shore, where I placed my house at his disposal ; and there he pulled himself together—until the next time.

I have kept the Chinese naval officer to the last because there is so much to say about him. With all his faults I liked him ; those faults were not his own but those of circumstances.

I continued to be associated with them, more or less, for all my life in China. I think now of Woo and Tsao in their retirement at Peking when I visited them one day. Woo, the former Flag-Lieutenant ; Tsao, the former gunnery officer of the *Chen Yuen* ; both then Admirals retired, great friends and porcelain fiends. I lunched at first with Tsao and saw his wonderful collection. 'Woo tells me he also goes in for porcelain.'—'That 's exactly what he does,' said Tsao, 'he goes in for it. He does not collect ; he just sweeps the damn stuff up. It is quite useless for him ; he has not got the eye for colour, the touch for texture nor that fifth sense which enables me to tell a fake with certainty. His stuff is rubbish ; but you will see for yourself.' The next day I lunched with Woo and saw his collection, which appeared to me at least as good as Tsao's, to which I then referred. 'I suppose you did not notice that most of his things are clever fakes. It is very pathetic to see that poor blighter wasting all his substance on collecting rubbish ; but he refuses to believe that he has no judgment.' So these two good fellows—two of the very best—had found a pleasant occupation. Observe their language, their vernacular ; it is not a bit exaggerated. Their mental adaptability in that respect was quite extraordinary. On one occasion in the war there was reference to some unusual waste of money, and Woo the Flag-Lieutenant walked away whistling 'Pop goes the weasel.'

The raw human material of China for any purpose is at least as good as that of any other country, though some of its qualities are only latent and potential. I have seen them spring to life among the common men; but only rarely among the officers. Yet the officers are the same material—the same breed—as their men; as much, say, as in France, and more so than in England. Obviously, then, what they lack is not due to any inherent characteristics but to influences that infect their official status.

Ideals are common to all of us; common, too, is our blindness to their defects. They become transfigured to us, as the gilded and tinsel-covered image is transfigured to the worshipper; they deteriorate in the course of years, go rotten or get out of date, and still we blindly worship them. We saw that in the German Empire; if we open our eyes we can see it to-day in our own country; but in these two cases the cults not only did not undermine virility, they supported it. It is China's vast misfortune that her cult tends to emasculate every one who rises above the grade of coolie.

The influence of ideals is propagated through the medium of self-respect. It is a curious business, this self-respect; it has little to do with virtue; it is attained by conformity to a code. In *Jew Süss* it was the foul debaucheries of Duke Carl that pandered to his self-respect. In our grandfathers' time the man who missed the chance to ruin a country girl was thought a fool; and to-day the condition is merely modified. The woman beckons, barely knowing what she is doing; the man is scared, perhaps, and knows it is not worth the candle; but his manhood has a claim; he has to satisfy his self-respect. Yes, self-respect is involved in nearly all the evils of the world—from the exercise of graft to the embroilment of the world in a long and bloody war. It has involved also many other things, and among these, in Western countries, are fortitude and physical endurance. In Western countries, but not in China, for if you seek those qualities in Chinese leaders, you have to look for them among the Canton pirates and the Northern brigands; and that, of course, is why Chang Tso-lin

—an ex-brigand—was for a time China's greatest man. China is over-cultured. Under her culture, elemental virtues have become diverted and transmuted. One must disregard the mere moment of our lifetime in the history of China ; one must think in millenaries—in millenaries of desire for that classical culture which became the only road to greatness. The most significant stigma of that obsession of desire is to be seen in the Chinese hand—those delicately fine fingers, by which a single sweep of the brush can paint a bamboo leaf with all its lights and shades ; and the touch-spots on those finger-tips are so developed that the charm of jade lies not only in its colour, but in the feel of its varying texture.

But factors in character are in general quantitative. They may be diverted or transmuted, but they are not annulled. There is daring in the coolie when he is led—he has endurance and fortitude. The same qualities are necessarily in the higher classes, but there they take another form—the daring of commercial and political scheming, in which they run risks enough. But daring of that kind must centre in the few. It is only the few who have a chance to exercise it to any considerable degree ; and so the rest—the great bulk of them—are mere servitors in the furthering of the ambition of their masters. They never really serve a cause—only their master's interests or their own. It is a miserably vicious circle of cause and effect. It is no one's fault. They are caught in the machine and held there ; if one of them attempted to follow the principle, ' I will do my duty without regard to praise or blame,' he would inevitably go under.

Yet in this matter it is easy to misjudge. Our system—that of the West generally—is individualism ; that of the East is collectivism. And who can say that one is right and the other wrong ? China's collectivism, with the peculiar doctrine of her old sages about inter-related duties of persons, has preserved her as sole survivor of the ancient civilizations. It was a system that aimed at the permanence of the state—not as in the cases of other civilizations, at the permanence of a dynasty. It has obvious and outstanding virtues ; and for a state that was dominant—as China was—in the only world she knew, even the development of the characteristics which manifested themselves in those delicate and sensitive fingers, in the shedding of the cruder virtues, in the glorification of philosophy and in the leaving of defence to a lower grade of persons, had its points ; for, if all the world would do the same, with some regard for modern ideas, it might be a better place to live in. But, of course, the world the Chinese knew—on the condition of which the virtue of that cult was based—was not the real world. Thus were the Romans, in their supposed impregnability, deceived. And so also on China, from North and East and South, descended what to her were barbarians, but with this difference from the experience of Rome. Her enemies had not only the rude and crude quality of valour, but also arts and crafts of warfare beyond conception ; and, against this combination, China stood helpless.

But the long-drawn civil war will tend towards making endurance and fortitude fashionable qualities ; for, in spite of buying and selling of armies, treachery and double treachery and all those features which make Chinese civil war so burlesque, there really has been genuine fighting now and then, and valour will appreciate in credit.

The view here offered is merely an impression. It can only represent a portion of the picture, as I see it—that portion which is purely Chinese in character. But there is another part—a very striking one—drastically affecting the picture as a whole. That part is the incidence of Western cults and knowledge.

Think first of what happened in Japan in that respect. That state was a compact entity ; the Emperor's writ ran throughout the land. It was organized—above all it was organized. It has not been mere cleverness, nor bravery, that has made that country what she is to-day ; it has been organization. So when the West impinged on her, she put what it had to tell her in a sieve, and sifted out the parts useful to her—for example, all the sciences and the art of war. She looked at what was left behind—varying ideals of different Western states, religions of many and antagonistic kinds, art which struck her as unimaginative ; and most of it she threw in the dustbin. But what she sifted out she absorbed into her body politic as a lump of sugar is absorbed in a glass of water.

But in China Western knowledge and Western cults descended on her unguided and uncontrolled. There was no winnowing of it; there was no sifting of what was good for China from what was bad. There was no thought of doing so on the part of those who brought it—was it not Western and, therefore, good? And on the part of China there was no means to do so. So in poured science, history taught from different standpoints, liberty, freedom, individualism, the virtue of republics and of party government, and missionaries galore, from Roman Catholics to Seventh Day Adventists and even Holy Shakers; and young China, encouraged by its parents and eager for advance, lapped up the lot. So there was this new muddle superimposed upon the old; and with the combination of the two there set in a rot, a disintegration, on the fringe of China—so far only on its fringe—of those factors, of that matrix, which through all the ages had bound together the Chinese people. What was good in that old cult of theirs they tended to throw away; while the scum of it—nepotism, corruption and intrigue—they stuck to. What is good in Western ideals they can seldom give effect to; while what has no inherent virtue, but is an accident of our development—for example government by parties—they put up on a pedestal.

And until quite recently—perhaps even now [1]—the forces of philanthropy in Europe and America were busy with this cruel propagation, turning out students by the thousand every year; students with half-hatched notions, with ideas which their mental stomachs are quite incapable of absorbing; and for whom positions cannot possibly be found.

There has been no assimilation of Western knowledge into China's body politic. The simile here is not the lump of sugar in the glass of water as in Japan's case; here it is that of blobs of oil floating on the water and tending to go putrid. One should not blame the missionaries for this. Their part in it has been comparatively small; and whether that part has been right or wrong, good or bad, it was one that had to be. So let it stand at that. But with the educationalists the matter is very different. They should have known the forces they were playing with. It is quite true they were in good company. The foreign Ministers in China put their imprimatur on what they did, and foreign Chambers of Commerce gave them money; but these looked on them as experts; they approved and gave as to a church.

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[1] I am told, however, that the China educationalist of to-day has a better realization of what the country needs.

I am reminded of a story. An eminent philanthropist at Shanghai—an American—lunched with me alone one Sunday. He asked me had I been to church and what was the sermon's text? I replied that my deafness usually prevented me from hearing a sermon, but that on this occasion I had got the pith of the text, and it amounted to this: You can give all your goods to the poor and you can frizzle at the stake; but you will go to hell just the same, unless you love your neighbour. At these words my guest got up and walked about the room with his fingers in his hair, and I feared my slangy way had hurt his feelings. 'You will, I hope, excuse my agitation, when I tell you of the cause. That canned sermon of yours got me on the raw; its text always does. You see, I have been a propagandist all my life. My father was before me. I have written, and lectured, and led in propaganda. I am anti-nicotine, and anti-drink, anti-nearly everything that most men like; but that text always gives me cause to wonder whether I do these things because I love my neighbour or because I just like doing them.'

It is a pity that the China educationalist did not ask themselves that question years ago, but they and their other confrères did much worse than not ask themselves; they built up an influence which prevented others asking. Their tentacles were widely spread—over parliament and the State, over the publicity organs of the country; so that an independent publicist could not get a hearing. There is graft in other places than Chicago.[1]

Here again I give a broad impression of what I see. Exaggerated? Perhaps, but, as in some modern pictures, exaggerated by masses of lights and shades and absence of all detail; yet presenting truth.

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[1] This subject is dealt with further—in Appendix A.

V

INTERLUDE

1. HOME LEAVE

In those days there was no railway for those ninety miles from Tientsin to Peking. I made that journey in the usual springless cart—Kirk in another—not on a road but on a deep-rutted track across the brown plain. As yet no green except a few early sprouting crops ; mud colour everywhere ; houses made of mud, trees brown with dust. But on the morning of the third day there was seen rising from that ugly plain the blue and purple of the Western Hills, clean-cut colours which only that clear northern air can give. And in the evening there came, silhouetted against that blue and purple, the great red towers and the crenellated walls of Peking city. There seemed something biblical in this slow approach ; thus would ancient travellers have come to Jerusalem. In either case the great cynosure.

Now came the visit to Sir Robert Hart. At the time that visit seemed to me the very acme of misfortune and mistakes ; yet in the end nothing perhaps could have better served my purpose. I went with Kirk, not thinking of my deafness and how I ought to have the I.G.'s sole attention. That great little grey-bearded man received us very kindly. He spoke to both of us at first ; but I could not hear, and then he addressed himself to Kirk alone, and it was Kirk alone who gave an outline of our experiences. So I sat in that still loneliness of the deaf, fuming with annoyance and cursing myself for being such a fool as to have come with Kirk. Then suddenly Sir Robert turned to me. ' I have no use for deaf men in the Service ; but your case is exceptional. You are evidently unfit to go back to the cruisers ; but you have done very well in this unfortunate war, and, as a reward for your services, I have placed you in the Indoor Staff and appointed you Fourth Assistant B to Ichang.' A shock—a most palpable shock for me. Reward ! A junior—the most junior—clerkship as a reward to a sailor ! I did not wait to think ; doubtless that long still wait whetted my reply, for I blurted out : ' It is very kind of you, sir, and I thank you, but I do not want it. My sailor's knowledge is my stock-in-trade. I can no more afford to lose it than a grocer can his goods.' There was no forming of a conscious judgment in this answer ; it just bubbled out —a reaction to the unexpected.

The I.G.'s eyebrows lifted in surprise, then lowered with disapproval, and quite deliberately he moved his chair so as not to have me in his vision. Again a long, still, lonely wait, and he rose to dismiss us. I had shaken hands and was passing through the door, when he called me back. He said a firm of publishers had applied to him to arrange about a history of the war. He wished me to undertake it. Again came my answer pat. I should do it with great reluctance, because I could not partly tell the truth ; there must be many personalities that would be objected to in such a history, and I doubted the wisdom of it written by myself. The I.G. thought a moment and then said he would write me a letter on the subject, but he never did.

The nature of that interview was entirely my fault. In the letter approving my joining up he had said the war would make or mar me. I had shown now a lack of faith and showed it very crudely. He would have pushed me on and I should have been a Commissioner at an early age perhaps ; and I, in my youthful egotism, was offended because he did not treat me like a curly-headed boy. That great man, that autocrat, who kept his senior Commissioners at arm's-length, whose word was law, had been repulsed in a kind intention by a mere youngster. No wonder he resented it and turned his back on me.

And yet my attitude was very natural. I had been driven to use my independent judgment in that war, to shoulder some strange responsibilities, to deal with high-placed people as if I were their mental equal. One does not drop that attitude at once ; it takes a bit of time to flow back to the lower level. So I was in no humour to exercise the modest faith expected of me ; not even with the great I.G.

But in the end it turned out for the best. He was far too great a man to let it count against me. A career in a new navy proved a myth. I was appointed, when I returned from leave, to the Marine Department—that idea about a grocer's goods had taken root—and in a period of two years my salary increased fourfold.

Let me add here of my great Chief that in after years he always treated me with charming kindness and consideration, and allowed and encouraged a freedom of expression of my views that I believe was exceptional for him.

It was by a French mail steamer that I went home. I badly needed rest and quiet. At Weihaiwei and during its after business my condition did not bother me, but now the pendulum swung back ; yet the peace I wanted was not to be had. At Singapore came reporters, decent enough fellows, but such a nuisance. Refusals to be drawn, warnings of my danger from the law, only produced the statement that they had to write me up, and that, if I refused, there was nothing but invention for them.—' Invent and be damned ; but have a drink and talk of something else ' ; and so they invented gaily, as I later heard.

Then came quite the most unpleasant episode of intercourse that ever happened to me. There were many Dutch naval officers on board and a Dutch Consul-General—Lavino—who, I believe, had a world reputation for his wit as a raconteur, and who was man of the world to his finger-tips. There were other characters in the play : an English Colonel and his invalid wife and their lady companion—a quite young girl—who tended their children and for that reason lacked friends among the passengers ; also a fat French bank manager and his family ; and lastly some theatrical people.

The latter were to give an entertainment after dinner. The Colonel and his wife were not going, but they asked me to find the girl a seat, and I did so, alongside a hatchway. Lavino and his officers stood at the back—I with them. Then came an interval, the waiters brought coffee, and I took a cup to the girl, and sat alongside her on the hatchway. The curtain rose and for the moment I thought of staying where I was, but there came the realization that I might be blocking the view of those behind, so I rejoined the Dutchmen. Lavino, I knew, had left some time before for bridge. Now, when I went to bed, I did so with a feeling that the manner of those officers had changed to me; nothing very tangible, yet something; or was it some new development of my complaint that made me feel so?

But I woke up in the morning thinking of it with discomfort; and when, after our *petit déjeuner*, Lavino button-holed me with an air of seriousness and concern so very unlike his usual self, he said: 'Tyler, what is this my officers are saying about you?' And then out came the story. It seems that immediately the curtain rose, when I was sitting on the hatch, the banker, sitting two rows behind, told me to get out of it, and, when I did not move, repeated the same thing more emphatically; it was done not merely rudely but insultingly, and I had looked round at his second speech and then cleared out like a lamb.

Lavino accepted, of course, my explanation that owing to my deafness I had not heard a word, and that my looking round was due to the sudden realization that I might be in the way. 'But,' said Lavino, 'the mere acceptance of your story cannot end the matter. Were you on a British vessel or in other circumstances, you might, in your English way, ignore the insult and treat it with contempt; but I want to impress upon you that you cannot do that here. To our officers, an insult is a deadly thing which must be wiped out somehow, or a stigma is left that sticks through life. To them you are the English officer; they refer to you as such. To them it is not only the honour of your navy that is at stake and in your hands, but that of naval officers in general.' His earnestness, of course, impressed me. ‘ Lavino, you know how little we British understand your continental code ; advise me, please, what I should do.’—‘ No, that is the very thing which at this stage I cannot do. Later I can help you. It is essential that I tell my officers that what you did was quite spontaneous ; it is the one thing that we cannot lie about,’ and he left me.

So here was I, who wanted peace and quietness, involved in this ridiculous affair, with the eyes of a little world upon me and an absurd responsibility placed vicariously on my shoulders. It was their idea of honour, not mine, that mattered. It would be so easy to plug the banker on the nose ; but my soul rebelled against an unseemly row and the publicity of it ; and he had a wife and family, which would make the thing much worse. And if, in that atmosphere of damaged honour, he challenged me to a duel, what could I do but fight—so much had Lavino’s words affected me. I would have the choice of weapons, and I thought of Winchester repeaters under the coconut trees at Colombo—and the size of the banker’s paunch.

I walked the deck and tried to rake up what I had read about the code of honour. Then I remembered that nothing drastic or committal was needed for the second step ; that after all the code was but a formalizing of a street-boy’s quarrel. ‘ Who are you a-shoving of ’—the blows, if any, come later.

So I sought Lavino, got him to accompany me, told him nothing, and then we found the banker. ‘ I find it difficult to believe it, but I am told that last night you ordered me to get out of your light and that you did it rudely.’—‘ Well, you were in my way and I told you to go.’ Then I expressed myself. He knew, I told him, that I was deaf and he had tried to get cheap and filthy credit out of it ; he was this and the other kind of coward, and, were it not for the suffering a worse scandal would cause his wife, I would have permanently changed his face. He thought a moment as we stood there facing him, and then he turned away and went below. I looked up questioningly at Lavino.—‘ That ’s excellent ; formal, dignified, effective ; a most undoubted counter-insult ; just what was needed, neither more nor less. I ’ll tell my officers at once.' Thus that ridiculous affair, with all its very earnest seriousness ; but the banker had a rotten time thereafter and became a butt.

At Genoa I was told there were visitors for me. What could it mean? They were representatives of Ansaldo & Company, the great Italian shipbuilders. They had a banquet arranged for me and they trusted that I would give them the pleasure of my company. 'It 's most frightfully kind of you, but why should you entertain me? '—' Well, you know, it 's quite impossible to keep these things a secret. It 's known, of course, that you are coming home to buy another fleet for China, and naturally we wish to take advantage of our geographical position to have the first shot at you.' So that wretched story had been started. I denied it vigorously, but it made no difference. 'We understand quite well ; of course, you must deny it, and may I compliment you on the almost convincing way in which you do so.' And in the end, because of their kindly pressing insistence, I went on shore and dined with them, on condition that they talked none of their imaginary business. I felt an awful fraud, and I wonder how they felt later when they knew—but that was a year or so later.

Arrived at home I consulted specialists about my ears. It was quite hopeless. The drums had ruptured, healed and thickened, and nothing could be done ; but I saw one after the other, and they fiddled with me and took my fees until my shell-shock came again ; and once more was I very miserable, and all the world looked black. But when I was at my very worst, my mother's doctor told me very seriously to eschew his kind and more particularly the specialists. On that most sensible advice I applied to the Admiralty for gunnery and torpedo short courses, and was ordered at once to Plymouth. There, in the great interest of the work, that foul complaint fell off me like a cloak ; and never came back for five and twenty years.

At Plymouth I had one of the pleasantest times of my life, both socially and otherwise. The work was easy for me. I knew the principles ; it was but a matter of new details ; and I got my First Class easily and far ahead of all the others. The staff knew, of course, what I had done and how I was a misdemeanant of the law, but no one ever spoke of it and, of course, I did not ; but once a lecturer on warfare said : ‘ Tyler, it ’s you who should be here.’ I grinned and said nothing. Only to Limpus—now Admiral Sir Arthur—did I speak of the gun-sight I had patented and of my discussion with Yarrow on the inevitableness of submarines. I obtained permission for a special course in battalion work and physical drill, and the Admiralty, of course, knew why I wanted it ; and at the end Captain Hammond asked me to dine with him alone. He also never said a word about the war—so strict were we all about that breach of law—but over the wine he told me he had been instructed by the Admiralty to express their willingness to take me fully into the service and appoint me forthwith as gunnery and torpedo officer of a cruiser. It was a great compliment, and it pleased me vastly, but I did not hesitate. I would have accepted like a shot had I not been deaf ; but with that disadvantage I felt certain I could not stand a wardroom life ; and Hammond said that I was wise.

Now for the last episode of that leave. My ship was sailing on the morrow and I was playing golf at Weston-super-Mare when an urgent telegram arrived. It was from Moberly Bell, the Editor of the *Times*, saying he had just heard I was returning to China and that he wished to see me. Would I dine with him to-morrow ? I replied, ‘ Impossible. Ship leaves to-morrow night.’ I did not know him, and I was not interested. Publicity now would have been fairly safe, but I had no desire for it. But Bell telegraphed again showing how I could dine and catch such and such a train and that I must not dress ; so it really looked as if there were some important reason, and I accepted.

There were four or five men and a lady or two, but I did not hear their names and, if I had, could not have placed them. I was asked my views on Far Eastern politics. France, Russia and Germany had forced Japan to give up the Liaotung

Peninsula, which she had conquered. England had refused to act in concert. What did I think about it? My answer was quite definite. What had happened was for the best; it was most desirable to keep the Japanese from the continent; the other powers had picked the chestnut from the fire to our advantage. One of those present held a different view and argued on it. Now, naturally I was a modest and retiring young man, but somehow I got it in my head that these were armchair politicians and that I knew more than they about the Far Eastern situation. I did not dream of their being experts; and so I argued quite vigorously, maintained my point and would have none of the other view. I enjoyed the little flutter of importance, the first of the kind I had ever had. So, owing to my curious self-confidence on that one occasion, I gave a quite fictitious impression of my ability and character, for after dinner and wine, Bell kept me back and forthwith offered me the post of correspondent at Peking. I did not hesitate; I was quite unfitted for the job; there was a certain quality of being an ordinary man's man that was essential for the post, and I had not got it; and my deafness alone would be a serious handicap. So I had to let this most interesting chance pass by; and Dr. Morrison got the post and made a great reputation in it.

My antagonist at dinner was Chirol—now Sir Valentine[1]—the famous expert in foreign politics.

2. ABOUT FEAR

In my story of the war between China and Japan there are references to fear: a subject that gives one cause for thought. Why should we who know first-hand what fear is leave the subject so entirely in the hands of the neurologists who, as a matter of probability, only know it as an entomologist knows a beetle? So let me, who have experienced fear in several forms, say what I think about it. But let the limitation of the individual first be noted. He knows his own experiences but no others.

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[1] Sir Valentine Chirol allows me to say that his recollection of the incident tallies with my own.

As with the expert, the others are mere beetles, wriggling perhaps on their transfixing pins and inarticulate. Regarding these the expert generalizes from outward signs, while we, the less learned, can view them with the inner light of sympathy.

Is fear something to be ashamed of ? If so, then all those tens of thousands who died heroically in the World War, had cause for shame ; or nearly all, for there are some few exceptions who seem to lack the sense and probably lack something else. No. Fear in danger is quite normal ; it is an inheritance from those ages when to flee from danger was a thing of course, and in those early days it was not conscious fear ; it was a tropism—a mechanical reaction to a stimulus, and so, in bad cases, it remains. In these the primitive reaction rules, and in all of us it operates to some extent. For, think, is fear a matter of the mind or is it something physical ? The mind of course indicates the danger and possibly exaggerates it ; but it is not the knowledge of danger that constitutes fear but what happens consequently in the body. It is the physical, and not the mental, factor that causes inhibitions. In sudden instant danger there is that frond-like growth of creeping chill, commencing at the tail and extending to the shoulders, and to the hair roots. Its occurrence seems independent of the magnitude of danger. It may occur from the sudden snarl of a dog behind one ; from a supposed burglar in the dark, when your wife has sent you down to investigate a noise ; or when defenceless from the bayonet of your enemy. Its quality and even its degree is much about the same in all these cases.

There may be, whether in sudden danger or danger long sustained, actual paralysis, an atavism of another kind to that already mentioned and having its origin, perhaps, in the hypnotic influence of the prehistoric snake. Most of you, it is likely, remember a childhood's dream of coming down the staircase and seeing in the hall a burglar with a knife, and how he crept towards you and you could not scream or turn and run ; your feet were turned to lead and refused to lift. Perhaps you did not wake before he caught you and slowly pushed the knife into you, and you heard the gristle cut ; and if you were a boy you kept this dream a secret, for you feared it showed you were a coward.

There is another kind of fear that is harder to describe—that low, sinking feeling in the stomach, which goes with general but not immediate apprehension. Thus one feels about the doubtful issue of the sickness of one's child ; thus one stricken with the impotence of a nervous malady, with a career prematurely broken, feels ; thus, too, one can imagine, feels the prisoner waiting for his execution.

In all these cases, and the others mentioned, the distress is chiefly physical. The mind but takes cognizance of the senses. And the cause, where lies it ? In the mind or in the body ? Of course, in both and curiously intermixed, as in a toothache, when a house on fire will cure it.

'Be master of your soul.' How often does one see this smug complacent statement. With equal non-sense might one say, 'Be master of your blood ; don't get consumption.' The will can do a lot, of course, and faith really can work miracles ; but the will may be diseased as may be the blood and tissues. One hears contemptuously of *malades imaginaires*, when the right term is a disease of the imagination—a disease as real as any other, but much more difficult to cure. So the poor wretches who suffer from inhibitory fears are no more to blame than if they had consumption ; and for relief from the cruel stigma which formerly attached to them they have the neurologists to thank.

Yet there are fears that are obscene—those that result in scheming for security by the sacrifice of others, even where the security is only temporary. And there are fears whose chief feature is their foolishness—the immediate avoidance of a lesser danger at the certain cost of a greater later one—an example this of tropism.

But, kept to the last, is another fear. It is a glorious fear, under which the stress of apprehension produces inspiration from the subconscious mind, which takes control and guides, and this feeling is one of great exhilaration.

So do not mix up fear with cowardice. Fear may inspire or inhibit, with a gamut of reactions in between. Above all, the fear of fear—that complex thing—is a stimulus to bravery. That word slipped in by accident. We who know fear do not think of bravery, we think in terms of cowardice or the absence of it. If we can master cowardice we are well content and make no higher claim. To us bravery—at all events as applied to ourselves—is usually not a positive so much as a negative condition. Yet undoubtedly there is something more. The gratuitous incurring of a risk to save another is something positive, not negative. Its source is also inspiration—from an ideal ; and equally it is the subconscious mind that prompts and guides.

But on the whole it can be safely said that the great bulk of the World War's daring deeds—that untold number—were partly due to fear, either from the fear of fear, the inspiration of it or the desperation of it, and the fact adds largely to the heroism of the deeds. Mixed with the fear and forming with it an amalgam of stimulus, were pride of race, love of country, the spirit of adventure and many such incentives.

The subject here is fear. Perhaps too much is claimed for it as a factor in daring deeds. The sole object is to emphasize the fact that we need not be ashamed of it.

But I have still an example of fear differing in kind from those hitherto described. It happened later in my life but its place seems here.

I was travelling in Japan—a typhoid convalescent—and my train was skirting the inland sea with mountains close to on the other side. It had been raining heavily for days and the mountain streams were torrents. The train stopped at a wayside station, and we were told there was a wash-out that would take several days to mend. We could either return to Shimonoseki or put up in the village at the Company's expense. And then a Japanese passenger accosted me. He was an inspecting engineer of the railway ; he intended to walk along the line to the next station, distant some five miles or so, and invited me to join him. I did so gladly.

It was growing dusk, but the rain had ceased except for a fine drizzle. Soon we saw the naphtha flares of the working party at the wash-out, and I wondered how we should cross. We did so by a rope bridge—a very wobbly affair, but nothing to complain about by one who had been a sailor in his youth ; yet I felt relieved, in view of my poor condition, at this possible difficulty being past. The single line was embanked and we walked in file from sleeper to sleeper, and in silence. Then after a mile or two I heard the rumbling of broken water, and in due course there lay in front of us a lofty wooden trestle bridge some 800 feet long, spanning a raging torrent in a sunken course. Between the rails there ran a line of plank only ten inches wide—in Japan everything is small ; otherwise the bridge was but a skeleton. I thought my friend would stop and discuss the crossing, but no, he marched on to that plank without a word. A moment's hesitation on my part and I shed my mackintosh, and with that in one hand and my umbrella, opened, in the other, I also stepped that plank as if it were a tight-rope. I did it quite unhappily, for the bridge quivered strongly ; but I think my feeling of resentment at being let in for this unkind experience tended to shut out actual fear. At all events, I crossed without material difficulty.

My companion, who had gained somewhat on me, waited at the end. 'I didn't like that at all ; I hope you have no more luxuries of the kind for me.' He looked at me with no expression, then turned and walked along the line without a word ; and I knew that there was something more.

The dusk was gone. It was now dark and the sky heavily overcast as we trudged along the line, and all the time my ears were cocked for the rumble of another torrent. Then came that rumble and a bridge head ; and now at last he spoke. 'I very sorry. This not my district. I forgot this damn bifurcated river. I must cross. You better try too.'

It was now very dark. Some distance on the plank caught such light as there was and showed a ghostly streak, but underfoot it was invisible and I had to kneel to feel the width, the same meagre ten inches. The loom of the trees on the other bank was faintly visible ; otherwise blank darkness, and the river roared, and I knew that the bridge quivered and violently in the centre.

I thought of crawling on hands and knees, and tried it tentatively ; but it was quite impossible, the knees would never stand it. To straddle and jerk across was equally impossible, with sleepers in the way. It was walk or nothing. And then I spoke : ‘ Try to cross ! Try be damned. I am not a blasted mountain goat like you. It ’s not that I ’m afraid ’—I lied—‘ it is that my legs would not do what I tell them.’

‘ Again I very sorry ; but think ; country flooded everywhere ; no houses ; no can go back ; bridge there too ; rain all night and cold ; make you sick. You Englishman ; more better try.’

The predicament was rotten. On the one hand, to be wet and cold the whole night long, possessed moreover by a sense of ignominy ; and on the other a very poisonous risk. I feared paralysis, for once before when there was no risk of life my legs gave out from vertigo because I was not fit. It seemed a toss up which was the lesser evil, which was the lesser fear ; the fear of trying to cross, plus the apparent foolishness of doing so ; or the fear of self-respect. It reduced itself to that. I was still in painful doubt, when there jumped to my mind a story of a piece of string and how it gave confidence to a follower in some Alpine risk. With it came decision.

‘ Hold the end of my umbrella in your armpit and I will follow you ’ ; and so we trod that plank. My effort was to think of other things—or rather of persons, not things—of my people and my best girl and what they might be doing. And every time my foot came down on that unseen plank. I became automatous with a realization at the back of my mind that it made for safety, and that the chance was good. Then, when we were about in the middle of the bridge, my leader stumbled and stopped, giving my arm a nasty jerk, though he still retained the umbrella end.—‘ Take care, a loose plank ; I hit the butt-end. I nearly fell.’ Then a pause, and I could hear him panting from the shock. This standing still was much worse than walking, and I thought of the stability of a bicycle. And then he said : ‘ I no like this at all, and now I remember construction train may come at any time ; we better hurry up.’ So we started off again. But now the feeling of being an automaton had gone ; I became conscious of my feet or rather conscious of a kind of unconsciousness about them, and then it happened. I stepped off the plank and fell ; and as I fell I clutched the plank, my arms and chin were on it and one foot had found a lodging on a cross timber of the bridge. Now comes the curious feature of this adventure. One might well think that the shock of the fall would have unnerved me. It did not. Before the fall I had been in a blue funk ; but as I hung on that plank and realized how I had been saved from the torrent underneath, the fact exhilarated me. I clambered up assisted by my friend—he still had the umbrella—and I walked the other half of the bridge without a squirm. But I dreamt of that bridge for many nights.

3. A SHORE JOB

On my voyage back to China I had much to think about. My future was still quite uncertain. I had prepared myself for a career in a new Chinese navy, but I had no great faith in it materializing nor of it being anything specially desirable. I had refused a splendid opportunity for myself in our own navy on account of my deafness, and the same reason made the Customs Indoor Staff, to which I was now nominally appointed, almost equally unsuitable. The uncertainty was trying, but I knew I was a lucky person. The rut of those conditions which were normal for a mere sailor-man had been left by me ; and leaving that rut was the first step to getting on. I had no fine deeds to my credit in the war, but I had come through with a clean bill of health as regards my reputation, and that was an asset of very real value. But the greatest asset was the earning of self-confidence. I had been in stress and strain ; I had doubted and I had feared, yet I had kept my end up sufficiently well to make me consider I had stood the test ; and it was a very comfortable feeling.

It must, I think, have been on reaching Shanghai that I got the news of the looting of the Naval Fund[1] by the Empress Dowager for the purpose of embellishing her palaces ; so my chance was finished in that direction. I reported to the Commissioner as a Fourth Assistant B, and wondered whether something else might not turn up for me. It did, for Captain Bisbee, the Coast Inspector, wished to see me. I had served as his amanuensis on board the *Pingching* when his eyes were bad and he was on an inspection tour. He now told me of a problem in his duties which had so far defied solution. At the beginning of the war the Nanking Admiral had mined the narrow channels through the Tsungming Flats in the North Channel entrance to the Yangtsze. The Japanese had not been near the mine field ; but the big Chinese trading junks, though duly warned, had, Chinese-like, declined to be turned from their usual ways. So seventeen of them were blown up with great loss of life and valuable cargo. One can imagine the satisfaction of the Nanking Admiral at this clear evidence that his mines were not filled with coal dust, as the Shanghai foreign papers had declared ; but now the trouble was that these wrecks, with the five-knot current swirling round them, had entirely changed the channels and the banks ; so that no one knew where the mines were moored, for they had not been fixed relatively to permanent marks on the distant shore and islands. What was immediately worse was the breaking adrift of some of them and their appearance in the South Channel among the stream of foreign shipping.

The duty of dealing with this matter lay plainly with the Nanking Admiral, but from him there was a frank admission of inability. The Customs would not risk their vessels on the work, and besides they had no one with any knowledge of the business. What was needed was some one who would help the Nanking Admiral. Could I and would I undertake this task ?

I realized at once that this was no matter of sweeping a known mine field; it was one of sweeping the entire North Channel into any part of which mines might have drifted; and the area concerned was some fifty square miles. By what means it could be done was another matter; but, of course, I undertook the job. Nothing could have better suited me just then—another opportunity thrown at me, and this time one I could take advantage of.

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[1] This fund of ten million taels was raised by the issue of 8% bonds, which had the curiously appropriate name of 'Confidence.' No interest was ever paid, and the capital was used as stated.

The problem was one of great interest, if only by reason of the limited means at my disposal. I was given an old wooden corvette—the *Pow Ming*, a former flagship—in which I occupied the Admiral's huge quarters. The Captain was satisfactorily under my direction; the dozen or so of Lieutenants were college trained, but had forgotten most of the mere academic stuff they had learnt there. Then by a great stroke of luck I got an ex-North Sea trawler, which by a variety of commercial vicissitudes had fetched up at Shanghai, where she had been purchased by the Nanking Government and re-named the *Pootoo.* Powerful and handy, nicely bare and sheer, she was eminently adapted to my purposes. The *Pow Ming* was to be headquarters for myself and staff; the *Pootoo* was to be the tool with which I worked. I boarded her at Woosung with my gear—it included a large blackboard which I had found some difficulty in buying—and she took me to the *Pow Ming*, anchored in the North Channel, and there I settled down.

For a month I lectured to the officers on angles and nothing else—of good angles and bad ones, of sextants to measure them, of station-pointers to plot them, of double-angle fixes and their peculiar ways. I made them use those instruments—to 'sling 'em about' as the saying went. We practised in the *Pootoo* under way. Two officers with sextants, another with a station-pointer on the survey board. 'Fix!'—Up went the sextants to their eyes; then the angles are read and uttered, transferred to the station-pointer, that instrument slipped about a bit, and then the pencil point marking our position. Ten seconds to do this. It is much too slow. It must be done in five or six; for I shall have to tow and drop successively a dozen dragboats in a straight line across a rapid tideway and in an assigned position. My naval training had not included minesweeping, but in any case the method here would have to be original, both on account of limitation of means and the existence of special ones. For there were a number of local craft called dragboats ; the name, perhaps the boats themselves, originated in the frequent loss of anchors among the foreign sailing fleet in former times. They were long, low freeboarded, single-masted craft—a lofty mast with a lofty sail with its many-ended sheet. They carried lee boards, they sailed like witches, and their crews were real boatmen and expert at dragging in a tideway—a pair in company.

When we really got to work it was quite a pretty show—technically and otherwise. Twelve boats in tow with slips to a common tow-rope—a signalman on each. On the *Pootoo* the three officers are fixing ; I steer to reach the desired starting place and at such an angle with the tide that, with our speed, we cross it at right angles. We reach the spot ; our siren makes a signal and the first junk slips the tow-rope ; the others slip automatically in succession at the right distance. So there across the current lie these twelve boats in a straight line forming a single sweep half a mile in width—a sweep worked by the tide alone. In a spring tide they would cover five miles of ground or so, in a neap tide only two. If a pair of boats hooked anything, they signalled ; all boats then anchored ; one of that pair disconnected from the line ; her place was taken by a spare boat and the drag went on. Then at slack water a diver went down and reported what was found, usually a snag of sorts, but occasionally a mine or a mine's anchor.

By the time I had swept that fifty square miles of estuary bottom—with the necessary overlapping it was some ninety miles—and picked up all there was, which was not much, and come to the conclusion that the entrance was now safe for shipping, I was very tired of the work. From the beginning to the end it took six months to do. But those six months were not all dull. There was, for example, the trouble on the *Pootoo*. The men—especially the stokers—were leaving when they got the chance. The laodah, when I asked him what was up, slowly shook his head and walked away. The *Pow Ming* officers would not tell me, but they agreed that there was trouble—serious trouble that might make the *Pootoo* useless. Now the leading spirit on that craft was not the laodah but the engineer. He was a little fellow with a stutter, bright twinkling eyes and a pleasant manner. So I went to him. 'Have got trouble this side ; have ask plenty man what thing b'long ; no man wanchee talkee my ; so fashion b'long fool-pidgin ; s'pose something no proper, much more better I savee ; so just now I askee you what thing b'long ?' The little man thought a bit, his usually humorous face overclouded now with seriousness. 'Master, I talkee you true. This ship got devilo ; no common devilo ; this one b'long foreign ; have got one long piecee white beard ; any night any man no can sleep ; engine room have got ping-pong, ping-pong on the anvil all night long ; b'long devilo with his hammer. Plenty time have see. Two night ago I drunk plenty samshu, so no too muchee fear ; I go engine room and ask devilo what for makee so much bobbery ; then he makee all same fish in water, all same swim in air and go in ash pit ; furnace door b'long open ; I see he come between the fire bars, all same smoke, and go up funnel. I no savvy how he do so fashion.'

How I persuaded the crew that this apparition, though doubtless a nuisance, was quite harmless does not matter. I heard no more about it. But the interesting point was that the boat had been brought out by old Cunningham—a Scotch engineer with a long white beard ; he had left her, I believe, at Hongkong. I had good evidence that the crew had never heard of him, and that when that wraith of his played with the anvil and slithered up between the fire bars, he was alive and going strong at Singapore.

There was a surveying beacon in the neighbourhood—a long pole surmounted by two wicker balls—that I had been told was always falling down without the reason for it being known ; and now, when I needed it for my work, it disappeared one morning. So I sent a party to re-erect it and instructed the officer in charge to try to solve the mystery.

The story of the villagers, which he brought back, was this :—

Ever since that beacon was erected we have suffered from misfortunes. Our children have died, our crops have failed, and we have lost our cattle ; and so from time to time we hauled the beacon down, because of what the *fêng-shui* experts told us. We have not told those Customs cruiser officers about it because they would get us into trouble if they knew, and being foreigners they could never understand our reasons ; but now we are very glad to have the chance to tell you, and we hope and beg that you will have the situation remedied.

The facts are these :—Immediately to the westward of our village is the boundary of two territories. The one within which our village lies is dominated by a dragon, and the other by a tiger. Now some years ago the dragon was mutilated in an accident, which grieved him sorely and made his temper very bad ; but it was not the tiger's fault, so the two beasts remained in some degree of friendship, and the village prospered. It prospered until the beacon was erected, and then immediately began our trouble. So we had the *fêng-shui* experts in to trace the cause, and they said it was quite obvious. It was because the beacon lay within the tiger's land. The dragon was eaten up with jealousy about it, and in his rage ramped and roared and clawed about the boundary that he could not pass. He was tantalized beyond endurance by that beacon and its fittings just beyond his reach. ' Why, oh why, should the tiger have that beacon when he has no need for it, while I who need it badly cannot get it. It is most unfair, and I will give no one any peace until it is handed over.' That, said the *fêng-shui* men, is the cause of all the trouble. Get the cruiser people to shift the beacon to the eastward—six feet or so will do—and you will find your troubles ended !

I sent, of course, the party back at once to make the change. A year or so passed by before I landed at that village ; and then I was received with smiles and the story of their renewed prosperity.

My work in the North Channel was finished ; my report handed in ; a Notice to Mariners re-opening the channel had been advertised ; then one day Bisbee tested the degree of my deafness. When he had finished he made to me an astounding announcement. It was necessary he should have an understudy as Coast Inspector ; he wished to go on leave within a year or so ; Sir Robert Hart had left it to his discretion as to whether my deafness debarred me from the post ; he decided that it did not ; he would, therefore, at once recommend me for appointment as Deputy Coast Inspector. And thus at the age of thirty-one I left sea life and found my niche on shore.

VI

THE CHINESE MARITIME CUSTOMS

1. ITS BIRTH

THERE are several backgrounds to the picture of my life in China that now began ; one is the story of Shanghai ; another is that of the Customs Service. If I tell the latter first it will help towards the former. A full story of either would be a matter of historical research running into many volumes. All I can do is to give an impression of those features which are most salient to me, and in the case of the Customs those features are its birth and early growth.

In 1853 the Taiping Rebellion against the Manchu dynasty was in progress, and the rebels dominated more than half the country. In that year the walled city of Shanghai was captured by an independent rebel faction ; they held the city only, and the imperial troops invested it. Down river from the city wall lay the foreign settlements, which with the harbour were, owing to the fighting going on, declared neutral by the three treaty powers, Great Britain, France and America, and which the foreigners were determined to defend.

With the Government offices in the hands of rebels, with the imperial officials in the settlement as refugees and prohibited by the treaty powers from acting either there or on the river, the collection of the Customs imposts on foreign trade due to the Imperial Government became hung up. For certain reasons this stoppage of a normal function caused an embarrassing confusion. The situation was eventually met by an arrangement under which three delegates of the treaty powers superintended the collection ; and, in effect, that was the beginning of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service.

The result of the honest and efficient administration of these delegates was such that in 1858 the Imperial Government extended the system of its own free will to all the treaty ports, and placed it in charge of Mr. Horatio Nelson Lay, who had been the British delegate at Shanghai, and who was now lent from the Consular Service. It should be noted that at the time of his appointment there was a lull in the war which for the past three years England had waged against China; but it soon broke out again, and two years later —in 1860—Peking was occupied and the Summer Palace destroyed as a punishment for a monstrous outrage by the Chinese Government. Yet Lay maintained his post; and in 1861 when in connection with the payment of a war indemnity it became necessary for the Chinese to organize a consolidated Customs Service as an imperial instead of a provincial affair—which it had hitherto been—Lay was appointed its Inspector-General. His appointments were the more extraordinary inasmuch as when—immediately before he got the first of them—he was acting as interpreter to Lord Elgin in the peace negotiations at Tientsin, he treated Chinese high officials with notorious truculence and indignity. It was doubtless his ability and his honesty in raking in dollars for the Chinese authorities and his exceptional knowledge of their language that caused them to have confidence in him—for a time—in spite of his extraordinary attitude; for he viewed the Chinese as barbarians and held that it would be preposterous for a gentleman to work *under* them though he might work *for* them; and holding that view it was his ambition to be China's guiding spirit. Lay had a great capacity for work, organization and administration; but his wild obsession about his relationship to his employers doomed him to a monstrous failure.

In 1862 he went home on leave suffering from a serious wound sustained while fighting as a Shanghai volunteer against a band of marauders. It is now that Robert Hart comes into the picture. He was an Interpreter in the British Consulate at Canton, and when in 1858 the new Customs Service was in the making the high officials there wished him to be the local Commissioner; but placing himself in the hands of Lay he resigned the Consular Service and took the post of Deputy Commissioner at that port. Four years later Lay went home on leave, and Hart was appointed to take his place [1]—not by Lay but by the Peking Government. It appears that Bruce, the British envoy, nominated him; but it can be presumed that the appointment was also due to the influence of the high officials at Canton.

At the time that Lay went home on leave the Taiping rebels were at the zenith of their cause—it was in the succeeding year that Gordon took command of the Ever Victorious Army—and a scheme was mooted to form a navy manned by foreigners to assist in fighting them. Lay being in England, it was in his hands that the Chinese placed the matter; and the instructions of the Government were forwarded by Hart. Whatever those instructions were in detail, they must have left a lot to Lay's discretion; for there were factors in the problem that were anomalous and complicated. Obviously what was needed was a fleet of gunboats to operate on the waterways as the Ever Victorious Army operated on land; nominally under the orders of, to some extent independent of—by reason of the prestige of English officers—the Chinese high command. That nothing else was practically possible was a fact so obvious that it is likely it was not specifically mentioned.

Lay entered with zest into the business of ordering a fleet—eight vessels including some monitors with heavy guns—of equipping them and engaging officers and men. He was properly accredited, was supplied with ample funds, the British Government put its imprimatur on the business, and the Queen conferred a C.B. on him.

And now we come to Lay's monstrous escapade, to his gigantic bluff. He had engaged a naval captain, Sherard Osborn, to command the fleet, and he drew up an agreement with him, of which two clauses only need be quoted to show its nature :—

'Osborn undertakes to act upon all orders of the Emperor which may be conveyed direct to Lay; and Osborn engages not to attend to any orders conveyed through any other channel.'

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[1] The Shanghai Commissioner, Mr. Fitzroy, was appointed jointly with him, but does not appear to have materially functioned.

'Osborn, as Commander-in-Chief, is to have entire control over all vessels of European construction, as well as native vessels manned with Europeans, that may be in the employ of the Emperor of China or—under his authority—of the native guilds.'

Imagine that astounding act! He had been authorized to make whatever arrangements might in his judgment seem desirable; and on the strength of that appointed himself, in effect, as Lord High Admiral of all the Chinese fighting craft—by whomever owned or commanded—and with subordination only to the Throne. It was a case of riotous ambition—of administrative piracy. There is the mystery of a missing letter in this affair—a letter, following on his first instructions, which, stating the intention to appoint a Chinese officer of high rank to act with Osborn, clearly indicated what was expected. Lay said that he never got that letter. If he did not, it left the situation as already stated; if he did, it made it infinitely worse.

In due course that fleet of gunboats arrived in China; and then the fat was in the fire. Lay boldly made his claims and, according to the Chinese, added to them by demanding independence in revenue collection and, as a residence in Peking, a palace of the type reserved for members of the royal family.

The Government took prompt action; it dismissed Lay from his post but treated him financially with the greatest generosity. Osborn, imbued with Lay's ideas and hampered by his contracts with his officers and men, paid off his crews and returned to England; his conduct in the matter being generally approved. So ended a great fiasco; but it was one which purged the young Customs Service of a very serious evil.

In the meantime—for two years past—Hart had been in charge of the Service, and by his tact and ability had won the regard of every one; and now the fiasco of that fleet consolidated him in his position. There is room to wonder about those two years as locum-tenens: what was his relationship with Lay? How much did he know of what was being done about that fleet? He must have been aware of Lay's character;

how, although he had laid the foundations of the Customs Service with great ability, he had become a grave danger to it, and had become obnoxious to all the foreign communities of China.[1]

I tell this early history of Hart's appointment as Inspector-General because to me it is the most interesting and pregnant feature of his life. Lay's failure did more than give the post to Hart ; by an antithetic process it gave an object-lesson which guided him thereafter, and it threw up in relief that tact and wisdom in his dealing with the Chinese which made his great success, and which, in effect, gave him for a long time by means of leadership instead of driving the greater part of what Lay had aimed at.

With the foundation of the Service already soundly laid by Lay, with his own expert knowledge of revenue collection and with the clean slate and the practically unlimited authority he now possessed, the further building of the Revenue Department must have been comparatively simple. A great judge of character, he chose as his Commissioners men who could take a part in that construction and who could be quasi-diplomats to meet the quasi-diplomatic status which circumstances forced upon the Consuls.

And so the Service came to be a mighty thing. Here was this great country with its three thousand miles and more of coast and many thousands of miles of navigable rivers, with ports open to foreign trade increasing steadily in number ; and a rapidly increasing foreign shipping. All kinds of official action were needed of which the Chinese by themselves were quite incapable. There were dealings with the Consuls on revenue affairs—fines, confiscations, legal proceedings—there was the matter of harbour control, pilots and aids to navigation and hydrography, and later there came the subject of a postal service. All these functions became incorporated in the Foreign Customs, as it was called for short. Still later there came the hypothecation of the revenue collected by the Foreign Customs for the service of the many loans which had been raised. Into this great business the Inspector-General—of a later day—was perforce drawn.

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[1] Concerning this Sir Francis Aglen writes :—' Sir Robert Hart placed on record in the archives of the Inspectorate-General at Peking a complete account of his action in connection with the Sherard-Osborn fiasco. It took the form of a copy of a personal letter to Mr. H. N. Lay concerning all the ground of this deplorable affair from start to finish. This letter was unfortunately destroyed with the rest of the Peking archives in 1900. My recollection of it is that it was a most masterly exposition, and, although after so great a lapse of time I can remember no details, the impression left on my mind was that Hart, at his end of a most delicate affair, had been throughout loyal and helpful to Lay.

The structure that he built has now an age of over sixty years. It is difficult to see how China could have done without it, and she cannot do without it for some years to come ; but it has reached, I think, its zenith. In due course must come the end of its great purpose, and it will be left a memory in history, which will be an everlasting monument to Hart.

There is another chapter to the story of his early days. It has been said that the building up of the Revenue Department would be to him a comparatively simple matter ; there, with his expert knowledge, he would make no mistakes ; but what about those needs of shipping on that great extent of coast ? Here he had to build for a purpose which he could not fully understand and with unknown factors in the problem ; and because the technicalities of it lay outside his field of knowledge, it would have the greater fascination for him. It is here we reach that part of the Customs history which affects the story of myself, and which so far has never been recorded.

Owing to those unknown factors in the problem of a Marine Department, the design of the building was altered several times, and in the end there evolved a very strange affair, a hotchpotch thing, a patchwork, resulting from many failures ; indefinite in structure and in function, subordinate in form, weak apparently in position. But these qualities, apparently so detrimental, lent themselves later to a curious freedom of scope. Indefiniteness ? A little moral ju-jitsu could make it elasticity. Nominal subordination ? The same means could get from it far more consideration than from equality.

For nearly twenty years I controlled either the larger half or the whole of the Marine Department, and looking back I see things as I state ; though I did not always do so at the time.

In the earliest days of his appointment as Inspector-General, Hart was taking passage in a coasting steamer. As he walked the deck he would be thinking of his problems ; and mostly perhaps of the scheme of a Marine Department, for the steamer would remind him of the needs of shipping—needs, so far, almost entirely unmet. Lighthouses to be built, the sites to be selected, an engineer to build them ; buoys and beacons in the approaches to the harbours ; a fleet of vessels with officers to tend these aids to navigation ; a pilot service for the several ports and Harbour Masters and Harbour Regulations ; a host of things to arrange for and get organized—things which in other countries had grown for centuries but which here were non-existent. Of course he must have a man—a seaman—to undertake the technicalities, and who under guidance would co-ordinate his branch to that of the Revenue Department. He had already got that man — Captain Forbes, R.N. — for Marine Commissioner, but he wanted another two to fill the posts of Divisional Inspectors.

Now the master of that ship was A. M. Bisbee, an American, and from that stern-faced man of great reserve, Hart, in his quiet-mannered way, extracted all there was to know about him. He came of a family of sailors who were born, who were married, and who hoped to die at the New England port where the deep-sea sailing ships that they commanded had been built and registered. A race of sailors who considered that to command a sailing ship was the finest thing in all the world—a ship of those days with a vast poop and palatial accommodation ; the Captain's wife on board, her maid and a piano ; his children born on board perhaps ; a floating home in fact. Pride ? There never was such a virile pride as that of those old-time sailing skippers. Bisbee was among the last of them. He had followed in his father's footsteps, had commanded a great sailing ship at an early age, had married young so that he might see his sons ship-masters. Then came the cruel realization that he must be the last of that sea-brood. British steamers were driving the American sailing vessels off the seas, and the future loomed with the coming decadence of sail. So Bisbee took to steam—how and when I have forgotten.

From his tale and how he told it in that crisp way of his with no words wasted, the Inspector-General gauged the value of the man—his strength of character, his integrity and his intelligence ; and so he made his offer that Bisbee should be one of those Divisional Inspectors. But Bisbee said he was not competent ; he had gone to sea at fourteen years of age ; a post such as that offered required an educated man who could meet others on terms of full equality ; it required also special technics—marine surveying, for example—and some knowledge of administration suited to the purpose of the post. And Hart replied : ‘ No answer could have pleased me better ; it shows that I made no mistake in my selection. Your difficulties can easily be met. Competence ? Go and get it. I ’ll appoint you at once and give you two years’ full-pay leave ; use that leave to go to school in any way you like.’

Hart told Bisbee about the Marine Department he had planned, a self-contained department working side by side with the Revenue Department and, though separate, yet co-ordinated with it. He told how Captain Forbes had been appointed as Marine Commissioner to build up and control it ; he spoke of its need, its functions, and the fine future for the men engaged in its great purpose.

Now of those early days, when Bisbee returned to China and took up the Divisional Inspectorship, he told me very little, for it was a sore that rankled in his mind and never healed, but I gathered something. The great fiasco of Captain Forbes’s failure happened, I think, about the time of that return. He failed egregiously ; he was insubordinate to the Inspector-General—as if he had caught the Lay-Osborn megalomania. I have no knowledge of how the I.G. felt, but it can be imagined : keen disappointment at this failure of his plan ; resentment against the sailor who had let him down ; mistrust of sailors generally for constructive administrative purposes ; a revulsion of feeling against his offspring, of which he had hoped to be so proud. Revulsion and resentment—it was shown later when the rank of Bisbee and the Engineer-in-Chief was reduced from that of Commissioner to Deputy Commissioner, owing to a quarrel with a Revenue Commissioner for which the latter was by far the more to blame. But there was more to it than Forbes's failure. There was the quite recent fiasco of that gunboat fleet. Sherard Osborn could have averted it and turned events to his own and China's benefit ; but he did not rise to the occasion and adhered to his claim to be a kind of naval satrap. And then came Forbes's failure ; so one cannot be surprised if Hart came to the conclusion that if you let a sailor have his head he would bolt and smash things up.

Thus the great department was a myth ; it could never now materialize ; the functions it would have had were scattered among the Revenue Commissioners ; its chiefs, in its new attenuated form, were little more than mere advisers. And Bisbee felt it bitterly.

In due course what was left of the Marine Department was placed in charge of Bisbee—as Coast Inspector—and the Engineer-in-Chief. Bisbee was permanently disgruntled, but in a sort of sullen way was vastly keen. He had the character and the ability to make his job—such as it was—successful ; and, by the time I joined him, the Engineer-in-Chief had built a string of lights on those thousands of miles of coast as good and up-to-date as any in the world. So the needs of ships were met ; and on the whole I think that what was built on the ruins of that first idea was more efficient than the other could have been ; for in the circumstances of the treaty ports the connection between revenue collection and control of shipping proved to be most intimate, and two independent departments must have fallen foul of one another. So good, once more, came out of evil. Certainly that loose-knit organization, when later I took charge of it, suited my purposes far better than could have any more normal but more rigid thing.

2. THE MARINE DEPARTMENT

No chief could have been better to his deputy than Bisbee was to me—always kind and courteous and more, for he treated me with a sort of distinguished consideration, partly perhaps because I was to take his place. This fine treatment was the more remarkable as he tended to be rough and curt with many others, and his ‘ What ? ’ strongly aspirated, was like the snapping of an angry dog. In serious affairs, as president of an arbitration court or a court of inquiry, and we had a lot of those, Bisbee’s manner was perfect—assured and dignified and courteous ; but in minor intercourse, when he was nervous in his shyness, he put on, as a sort of armour plating, an attitude of heavy jocularity which often missed its purpose.

The Statistical Secretary, von Möllendorf, was transferred and visited our office to say good-bye, and, as he was leaving, said, ‘ Well, Captain Bisbee, if there is anything I can do for you at Ningpo, I hope you will let me know.’ And after a pause, the length of which was quite embarrassing, came Bisbee’s typical response, ‘ Mr. von Möllendorf, Commissioners please me most when they interfere with my business least.’ And certainly he did not mean to be unkind or rude.

I persuaded him to join the Shanghai Club, and after his election took him there, having arranged that my friend Pym should be on the spot to put him at his ease by some one’s welcome. So Pym came forward with a smile and hand outstretched and said, ‘ Captain Bisbee, I know you,’ and was going on to say ‘ even if you don’t know me.’ But Bisbee cut him short. ‘ Oh do you ? Well, I don’t know you.’ Pym understood and stayed and chatted for a time. Then Bisbee said, ‘ I am afraid Mr. Pym was a little hurt at my remark. I merely stated a fact. Please tell him that I intended no discourtesy.’

And over poor Bisbee there loomed a cloud, which his imagination greatly magnified and which he thought his whole world knew of ; but, of course, it did not. We were far too busy with to-day’s affairs and scandals to bother about what had happened years before.

His tragedy was this. He quarrelled with his wife—just incompatibility and nothing more ; and at Washington, where he had gone as China’s delegate to a Marine Conference, a reporter came into his room without announcement, saw a scene of violent quarrelling, promptly snapped the couple with his camera and then decamped. So in the next issue of the New York *Police Gazette* there appeared a full-page illustration entitled ‘ Domestic amenities of China’s delegate.’ It would have been a tragedy for any one ; it was doubly so to Bisbee with his sensitiveness and his shyness ; and drove him in his shell to live just like a hermit crab.

It was the mixture of his weaknesses, his strength of character, his great ability and his ever-charming kindness to me that was the reason for the strong affection that I bore my chief.

In May 1898, just twelve months since my date of joining him, Bisbee went on two years’ leave ; and now I was appointed Acting Coast Inspector and Acting Shanghai Harbour Master with the full pay of the post—a treatment as exceptional as it was gratifying. My age was thirty-four—not so very young, but I had no experience of this sort of thing. For six months I had been in Szechuen, and the other six I had mostly spent surveying ; but I had read the archives of the office, and that was the limit of my preparation. Things, however, were made extraordinarily easy for me in certain ways. Old Carlson, the Chief Berthing Officer, and Taylor, the Secretary, plainly wished me to succeed—whatever were their motives—and helped me all they could ; but it was to Louis Rocher, the Commissioner and a Frenchman, that I owed the greatest debt, for it was his strong support and tactful praise that early made me find myself. I started with the advantage that my experiences in the war gave me confidence in dealing with officials, and even my deafness was a kind of asset, as it kept me from the giddy crowd and made me concentrate. I needed all the advantages I had, because those two years of Bisbee’s absence were exceptionally strenuous. Here are a few of those early episodes.

Shanghai was growing rapidly, its shipping was increasing and especially in draught ; but the pilots were still governed by the rules which had been framed in the ’sixties. These rules laid down the tariff, the power of the Harbour Master to investigate complaints and to suspend or withdraw licences, but subject always to the veto of whatever Consul might be concerned. The pilots owned their schooners independently and worked in mutual competition ; and under the scheme the service was grossly inefficient; and now they asked for an increase in their tariff. Quite obviously this was the opportunity to effect the long-needed reorganization. I suggested a Pilot Master to be a member of my office. This drove the pilots to form an Association—I think a limited liability company—for the main purpose of opposing me; and then I played ju-jitsu. I welcomed the Association and offered it an official charter of self-government on certain terms. The Pilotage Authorities besides myself were the Consular Body and the Chamber of Commerce. I got the latter on my side, but the Consuls opposed bitterly my claim to abolish their right of veto. But in the end I got my way, and that Pilots' Charter—or something very like it—exists to-day. As a first shot at public affairs it was a gratifying success; gratifying too was the I.G.'s message of 'thanks for good work well done.'

Bisbee had explained how impossible it was to call on Naval Captains—there were so many of them; but that I ought to call on Admirals. And now Prince Henry, the Admiral of the German fleet, came to Shanghai. I had heard of his charm of manner, of his geniality and also of his waywardness—his sudden favouritisms and his equally sudden discarding of those he had so honoured. I met him alone in the drawing-room of the German Consulate—a smart torpedo-bearded officer with far less airs of the Admiral than any of them I have met. At first there was an easy social conversation about local sport and games and other things, and then he said with obviously genuine feeling: 'I am glad that you have come to see me; I had wished to meet you.' Then a thoughtful pause as if he were considering his words. 'You will doubtless realize that a man in my position does not often ask for a personal favour. Well, I am going to ask you one. I want you to let me have a German naval buoy. It lies within your power, and I ask you to exercise that power on my behalf. The British have a naval buoy; why should not we?'

Here was a pretty situation for me to handle with such tact as I could muster. I explained how the British were the firstcomers and had established their buoy before any harbour authorities existed; how the Japanese and French had in recent years demanded buoys and had to be refused—I blessed my reading of that correspondence—and the reasons why; and how, if I exercised my authority to give him what he asked for, I should raise a storm of protests, and the Inspector-General would intervene. Then I made reference to the personal nature of his request, and feelingly expressed my great regret at not being able to meet it. The Prince took my explanation very nicely and said, in effect, that he had had his shot at getting what he wanted and had failed. This interview was early in the forenoon. An hour or so later I received a formal invitation from the Captain of the German mail-ship *Bayern* to meet the Prince at lunch. At that long narrow table with its score or so of guests I found myself the only non-German present, and my seat was opposite the Prince's; and throughout that meal he spoke in English not only to myself but to the others. The psychology of that invitation puzzled me.

From the Soochow Creek to the French settlement lay the Shanghai bund, the river front of which we were so proud. At one end a public garden with a bandstand, then a paved pathway along the curve of the sloping river wall, and between that and the street a long stretch of well-kept lawns; the street lined with large houses where the merchant firms made their fortunes. Off the frontage were pontoons for cargo-boats and tenders, but we allowed no roofing to them that would spoil the view. In the river—the Whangpu—a British cruiser at her buoy; one of our Customs steamers ready to go out at any moment; our River Police hulk; and further up were mail-ships or other men-of-war; and on the Pootung shore were docks and factories. I know of no other river port possessed of such a charming frontage, and I walked it with a sense of satisfied authority. I took a keener interest in my connection with it than I did in my wider functions on the coast and at other ports.

Now there were tens of thousands of cargo-boats—lighters—on the river; and in the evening, when their work was done, a vast number of them congregated off the bund. They filled the space between the pontoons, and the River Police had great difficulty in preserving access to those landing places. This was because of the attraction of the Foochow Road—the Piccadilly Circus, as it were, of China—with its theatres and restaurants and sing-song girls. This congregation of cargo-boats with their crowd of boatmen formed the one blemish to our bund ; it had long been criticized, and I—the new broom—decided that it must be remedied. It was in March 1900 that I did this thing and got myself in the very devil of a mess. I issued a notification that after a certain date only a limited number of cargo-boats would be allowed to lie off the bund in the evening. The next day all the boatmen went on strike, not only those for general hire but those of the large lighters of the shipping companies. So here was a pretty kettle of fish—the whole business of the port hung up, and through my act. There had been a wheelbarrow riot some time before, owing to some new Municipal regulation about them, and the Council had been blamed for weakness in the matter. This affair of cargo-boats was far more serious with its great resulting losses, yet to give in would be most harmful. So I called upon the heads of shipping firms and asked them for their views. They had evidently met before, because all their answers were the same. The loss concerned was serious ; I was responsible for the situation and the responsibility for getting out of it rested on me solely ; no, they would express no opinion as to whether I should give way ; they declined to share any responsibility about the matter.

The strike lasted for seven days, and for that time no ship could load or be unloaded. A very anxious week for me ; meetings with the laodahs and the heads of native shipping hongs ; proposals and refusals ; acceptance and then repudiation ; again acceptance which intimidation by extremists spoiled ; police action against the intimidators ; Mellows, the head of the River Police—the man from Weihaiwei—and I, revolvers in our hands, discuss the matter on a Pootung wharf with a very nasty crowd of malcontents.

In the end the boatmen used a merchant, Mr. Iburg—if my memory is right—as an intermediary, and he and Chen Fei-ting, the head of the China Merchants Shipping Company, and representatives of the Chinese shipping hongs called at my office and made a new proposal: The boats to use the front without restriction except keeping the channel and approaches clear and all to leave the front at eight each evening. I agreed, and next day all were gaily back at work. During that week I effaced myself and did not pay my usual visits to the Club; but the public and the papers took the matter very well and I never heard a word of blame.

One day I received a telegram from Sir Robert Hart:—‘Proceed Wuhu and settle hulk question in consultation with Commissioner.’ I had not the slightest idea what it was all about, but I took the next boat up the Yangtsze. The only other passengers were Mr. Rickmers—the head of the German Rickmers Line—and his son-in-law, a soldier. I had a sister with me, and the four of us made friends. From Rickmers I learnt the purpose of my trip. His firm had applied for a berth for a hulk at Wuhu; the application had been refused by the local Harbour Master and the Commissioner on the grounds that there was no space available; it had already become a diplomatic question, and a German cruiser had been sent to press the matter, but without avail; and now Rickmers himself had come all the way from Germany about it.

He was an old man with a long white beard, and we spoke of many things. On the second day he and I were lying in our chairs on deck. There had been silence for a time between us; but now he said: ‘There is something I should like to say to you, but I am afraid I might offend you; and, considering what your mission is, it is the last thing I would do.’—‘Go ahead, Mr. Rickmers, and say just what you like. You are a bit older than I am, and I am sure that nothing you can say will hurt me.’—‘Well, as you put it like that, I think I ’ll venture. I have been taking stock of you more than you know—that is my way—and the conclusion I have come to is that you are just such another damned fool as that son-in-law of mine.’ I withstood the shock successfully and did not say a word. ‘You see, that son-in-law of mine is just a soldier. He is paid a pittance and his private means are small; he is capable enough, and could help me in my work and make a fortune for himself. But he won't. He sticks to his silly soldiering.' And then he paused a bit. 'Your job is something better than my son-in-law's. At least it is useful—to others. Your pay, I have no doubt, is better, yet for a man of your calibre must be but a pittance also. Don't you see how silly it is to work for others instead of working for yourself? It is so damned silly that it irritates me to see it. What are you doing on this trip? You are going on my business, not yours; and, if you do your duty and get me what I want, I shan't say thank you, while if you don't, you will never hear the end of it.'

Then the old man said that he would like to tell me the story of his life. I made no note of it in my diary, but I am fairly confident of my recollection of it:—

His father was a barge builder, and a friend persuaded him to build, on his behalf, a deep-sea sailing ship; and, when the hull was near completion, that friend went bankrupt. The builder was in despair and feared bankruptcy himself, but his son said: 'Father, turn this misfortune to our benefit; mortgage the hull, complete the ship, start her trading, and I will go as supercargo'; and that was the beginning of the great Rickmers Line. 'And now,' said Mr. Rickmers, 'I am a very wealthy man; I made up my mind I would never work for any one but myself; money—all the time—had been the object of my life.' And then I made my only comment on his lecture and his story. 'You 've been lucky, Mr. Rickmers. Others who have followed your procedure have found themselves in jail.'—'A bit of your own back because I was so rude? Well, well! I deserved it, and besides that, you are quite right.'

We reached Wuhu. I found the refusal of the application was quite unjustified, and settled the matter in a couple of hours to every one's satisfaction.

It was such episodes as this, showing the incompetency of Commissioners and their untrained Tide-surveyors—Harbour

Masters[1]—to deal with the increasing number of technical questions, that caused the Inspectorate to take a somewhat altered view of the Marine Department; and later questions of the kind were immediately referred to me.

On the 1st June 1900 I handed over charge to Bisbee. I had corresponded with him freely while he was on leave and told him of events. It was a delicate affair to reorganize the pilots in the absence of my chief, and I had been warned he would not like it. But that was not the case—he was far too great a man; he approved and warmly complimented me.

I had known that his heart was weak. Since he had come on shore he had lived a life of rage—a rage of work and keenness; a rage against the limitations of his post and at what he thought the injustice of his treatment; a rage, perhaps, against his own social limitations. I always thought that it was that tragic turmoil of his soul that caused his heart disease.

A month after his return from leave he laid up, and I was told that he was doomed. He had that terrible complaint, aortic aneurism. The wall of the great artery had weakened and bulged under normal blood pressure; the bulge pressed on the windpipe and so suffocated him; then, when nearly dying from the suffocation, the weakened pressure caused the bulge to lessen and breathing to be possible once more. So there was alternate tortured dying and resuscitation—a martyrdom of suffering. The doctor told me that with a man as strong as Bisbee this condition might go on for weeks. I think the pair of them had come to an arrangement, for one day I was sent for by the doctor. Bisbee asked me the time of high water and I told him it had occurred an hour before. ‘ That ’s fine! I ’ll go out on the ebb.’ Then when his attack began again and he was already gasping, he beckoned to me to come close and whispered so that the doctor should not hear. ‘ I hope that your ambition will be fulfilled.'—' What ambition, Captain Bisbee ? ' And through his pain he smiled and answered, ' That you go to Peking.' I had no such ambition at the time, but perhaps in his condition he delved in my subconsciousness and became prophetic. Then came another dreadful suffocation, and that fine old doctor, using morphia, saw to it that it was the last. I wept, and the doctor nearly did so too.

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[1] A Tide-surveyor was the head of the outdoor staff of the Revenue Department at a port, and he always rose from the ranks. Under the Marine Department scheme they functioned as Harbour Masters of ports other than Shanghai. As Harbour Masters they had important duties assigned to them by treaty stipulations in which they were nominally independent of their own Commissioners.

Shaweishan Island lies off the northern entrance to the Yangtsze river. It is conical and has a lighthouse on the top. Bisbee wished that island to be his monument, and on his deathbed made his last request. So, later, I had his initials A. M. B. cut in twelve-foot letters on a cliff face and painted white, for all the passing world to see. Of course the paint has gone, but those outlined letters will for some centuries to come face the sea that Bisbee loved.

3. THE COAST INSPECTOR'S WORK

The functions of the Marine Department grew ; I obtained sole charge of it—a new Department of Works being created for the Engineer-in-Chief—and it approached a semblance of what had been originally intended. The fleet of Customs cruisers was placed under my control and the building of all new craft ; hydrographic work grew until we published our own charts and the British Navy withdrew their surveying vessels ; harbour and river conservancy matters—except where there were special organizations—fell into my hands ; meteorological work in conjunction with Siccawei Observatory became an affair of Far Eastern international importance in which we took the lead. And this was in addition to the older functions of administration of lights and other aids to navigation on the coast ; keeping track of changing channels and marking them ; issuing Notices to Mariners ; pilotage, harbour control and quarantine affairs ; courts of inquiry and arbitration about shipping accidents ; and dealing with the Consuls and other local authorities on terms of equality. Just ordinary administrative work? Quite so; but there were more technics in the hands of one man than could be the case in any other country.

But, outside the duties pertaining to my post, circumstances forced on me another set of activities. My previous service with the Chinese Navy resulted in a continued connection with it, sometimes as an informal adviser, sometimes with an official appointment. Those were years of steadily increasing ferment in Chinese affairs—the Boxer outbreak; the Russo-Japanese War, fought mainly on Chinese soil and in Chinese waters; the revolution which ousted the Manchu dynasty; Yuan Shih-kai's attempt to make himself Emperor; the effect of the Great War in which China, late in the day, became an ally; the period—not yet for certain ended—of independent military satraps. In all those affairs I acted as adviser to the Navy. And there was something more. My friend Ludwig Basse became a trusted man to the three satraps at Tientsin, Tsinanfu and Nanking, and so I got to know them, had the entrée to their Yamens, and was given certain missions by them. Those extra-Customs functions were a curious feature in my life. Some were permitted rather than authorized by the Inspector-General; others were definitely authorized, and in most of them I had the great advantage of my chief's advice and warnings. My Customs work came first,—it was what I drew my pay for; for the other work I got nothing except some decorations. Yet what I have to say about my life in China is mostly about my extra-Customs work. That is because it better lends itself to telling; and so the greater part of what I have to say about my Customs life will be concentrated in this single chapter.

The work of the Department was very interesting. It was varied and pleasant—a few months in the office, then handing over to my deputy and going on a trip in a large yacht-like steamer, inspecting lights, perhaps, or starting a survey dealing with a harbour question at a port, or something of the sort; then Shanghai again.

My two deputies, Eldridge and Myhre, were my personal friends, former shipmates and my own nominees. Both were senior to me in the Service; it was just that war and opportunity that made me be their chief ; they were such splendid fellows, so capable and so loyal. I should like to mention all the other members of my staff, both foreigners and Chinese ; of course I must not, but I look back on them with strong feelings of affectionate regard and gratitude.

Every year or so I made a visit to Peking and talked things over with Sir Robert Hart, and later with his successor. I have already told the story of that first interview with him, when I was very crude and he resented it. That he did not score it up against me is very plain. My other visits to him were always a great pleasure—invariably I left gratified and pleased.

With many others whom he treated well or who have not nursed a grievance I feel a reverence for his memory that tends to prevent anything being said about him except in adulation. That tendency is wrong, for to throw a decent light on the human nature of a man of fame should be of interest.

I saw little of him, and yet I seem to know a fair amount about him. A frequent contact is often not the closest. The mask, which such a chieftainship as his demands, is more likely to be lifted to the transient than to the more permanent ; besides, one hears of things, and some hear more than others ; and so, from this and that, I get an impression of his inner self.

He was a man of deep emotion that, however much controlled, demanded outlet ; and one side of him was highly spiritual. But the spiritual side in emotional natures has often a reverse one that is very different, giving rise to those incongruities of character that one hears of now and then. And thus it was—in some degree—with Hart.

To me he lifted the screen but once. I had written a booklet on Religion and the Fourth Dimension—a sort of transcendental thesis.[1] Sir Robert Hart had seen it and now discussed it. He had read it through without a stop, he said, and found it intellectually very interesting ; but he went on to say that from the religious point of view it had no interest for him. The intellectual and the spiritual were two quite different things. Then in his quiet and very simple way he spoke about his certain faith and hope—the faith he had been brought up in, modified but slightly by the facts of science. It was a most illuminating thing to hear him talk in that esoteric language of the Church, and I went away abashed.

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[1] It seems worth noting that in that booklet, written in 1907, I stated in effect that, while we can think of the Fourth Dimension in terms of Time, it cannot really be Time.

He exercised autocratic power over a staff of several thousands for a period of very many years. In that respect his position was unique. Such a power is apt to sap the finer susceptibilities, and it may well be doubted if any man could use it without grave lapses in the exercise of justice. It should be remembered too that strength and greatness rarely march with all the virtues. So there are some, including two or three of high ability, who bitterly consider that their lives were spoilt by him. But so, I think, it must always be.

I had suggested that he revert more to his original scheme for the Marine Department and appoint me Marine Commissioner or Marine Secretary. The next day we were sitting in his garden having tea. There was silence for a time, and then I said : ‘ Sir Robert, have you ever noticed the difference between a tree of that kind ’—I pointed to a juniper—‘ and an oak tree, which explains the difference in their size ? ’ His sharp shrewd eyes met mine over the edge of his tea-cup. ‘ Tell me what is in your mind.’—‘ Well, the juniper has a trunk and twigs. The oak has trunk and boughs and twigs.’ I paused a bit and added, ‘ Won’t you let me be a branch, sir ? ’ Could presumption have been greater ! But he took it, as I knew he would, quite well. He smiled and said : ‘ So you are returning to the charge ! I have thought that matter over. It is now too late for me to make the change. You must tackle my successor.’

Sir Robert’s brother-in-law—the late Sir Robert Bredon—succeeded him for a time as Acting Inspector-General. He had been deputy before with his office at Shanghai and was very popular with the community—chairman of the race and other clubs ; a social notable. Clever and quick and with big ideas, he seemed the very man to be a leader ; yet when the confirmation of his post was mooted, Shanghai rose up against him—and he got a knighthood in exchange. An instructive illustration, this, of the detriment of a certain kind of popularity. There is not a doubt about it that reserve is a good asset to a leader. He is human, and there must be facets of his nature which, if known, would tend to make him cheap—ignorance is to some extent involved in faith.

I was travelling with Bredon on a coaster, and we paced the deck in silence. Then apropos of nothing Bredon said : ‘ What do you consider are the factors making for a great success in public life ? ’ I had thought of it before, so had my answer ready : ‘ The gift of expression, for only thus can one justify one’s judgments and gain faith ; absolute unselfishness, because one’s cause is quite enough to think about ; and a measure of unscrupulousness exercised with great discretion in emergencies.’—‘ That is quite well put,’ said Bredon, ‘ but I don’t agree about unselfishness. One must look first after oneself in order to be there to do the work.’ It was the Chinese point of view so necessary for them, but so unsuitable for us, and the answer was significant of Shanghai’s attitude.

I have already told some stories about the work of the Department when I was acting in Bisbee’s place ; and now I will tell some of a later date. If there is any virtue in them, it is in indicating how things were done in China, for stories of this kind tend to be selected because I look back upon them with a sense of satisfaction as exploits in a sense—though stunts is nearer to my meaning : something that is lighter hearted and less ambitious. I regret this fact. I should so much rather have been a man of no affairs, who could tell the tales of what he saw and heard ; or—a more ambitious wish—a man of great affairs who could sink himself in the story of the important and interesting events with which he had to deal. But I was neither. I was a man of comparatively small affairs, and because of that my memory and vision tend to be dominated by my little problems of the past. Yet it may be that these personal accounts will throw some special light on conditions as they were in China.

The subject of improving the waterway to Shanghai had long been agitated. Mr. Hewett, the P. & O. Agent, a man prolific of ideas, drew up a scheme in about '98 and tried to get me to support it. But it was teeming with defects ; it took away from China the sovereignty of the river ; it required China to pay half the cost, and the only representation given to her on a board of nine was the Customs Commissioner—a foreigner. Hewett was stubborn ; it was his pet creation and he would not modify it. The Chamber of Commerce, attaching no importance to the details, which they believed would be amended later if the application came to anything, gave it their approval and sent it to the Legations at Peking. The Legations also put their imprimatur on this hopelessly impracticable scheme ; then filed it in a pigeon-hole.

In 1901 there came the framing of the Boxer peace protocol, and some one took that scheme of Hewett's from its hole and made it Annex No. 17. I find this entry in my diary : '11th September 1901. Called on some of the Chamber of Commerce Committee about the Conservancy Annex. They all express regret for having put forward such a rotten scheme.'

It was A. E. Hippisley—one of the Customs Commissioners assisting the Chinese plenipotentiaries in the framing of the new commercial treaty—who made a suggestion for a change, and, as a result, China agreed to pay the whole cost based on the other scheme's estimate, the work being conducted under the direction of the Chinese Taotai and the Customs Commissioner ; but this scheme—the best that could at the time be arranged—also had grave defects. There could be no certainty of what the work would cost, and a fixed sum had, in effect, been provided, and nothing for later maintenance.

The Engineer appointed was de Rijke, a distinguished Dutch expert and a personal friend of mine. He had enough to do with the difficult technicalities of his task ; finance and looking to the future was not his job. The Taotai, of course, was a figure-head ; and the third was Hobson, the Shanghai Commissioner, and what he thought about the future I never knew. After four years' strenuous work the notorious Woosung Inner Bar no more existed. The work was a notable and creditable performance ; but of course other operations were now needed, to say nothing of maintenance ; and the funds were nearly spent. A further eight million dollars were asked for from the Government—something like twice as much as the original grant. The Chinese Government was quite naturally very angry at this unexpected situation and refused to renew the contract of de Rijke, which expired about this time.[1]

A farewell dinner was given to de Rijke, and a group of leading Consuls-General and of leading business men attended. There were speeches at that dinner which I did not hear ; but de Rijke spoke of the perils impending over the situation and advised that faith be placed in me.

And now I have a story about a sudden opportunity and the grasping of it. I had attended that dinner merely as a social function. Shanghai conservancy affairs should have been, but had not been, my business ; I had always had—as an onlooker—an anxiety about it, but I had never even turned over in my mind a constructive scheme. But after dinner when we were standing about in groups and I had been silent, some one said : 'Well, Tyler, haven't you any ideas about it ?' And an inner prompting came to me. 'Yes, I have ideas ; would you really like to hear them ?' and the group increased around me.

'For years Shanghai has talked a lot about conservancy and complained and criticized, but never yet has it put forward a practicable scheme. Do it now. A more suitable management is needed for one thing—that can easily be arranged ; but the dominant matter is the provision of money. The Chinese will not give it ; it is not desirable that they should ; the obvious thing to do is to find the funds yourselves. Why not ? A tax on trade that would meet all needs would not be felt ; it would be incident not on Shanghai but on the millions that Shanghai trade supplies.' This expression of opinion and its practical acceptance took about five minutes. It was arranged that on the morrow I should discuss the matter further with Warren, the British Consul-General, and Landale of Jardines.

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[1] Mr. H. von Heidenstam, a Swede, was then appointed by the Nanking Viceroy. The choice—as it happened—was very good.

I got up early in the morning and drafted out my scheme. The same board as before with the addition of either myself or the Customs Engineer-in-Chief; but now there would be a consultative committee of commercial interests. At eleven I started for the British Consulate; but on the way I got a brain wave. The crux of the matter lay with the German Consul-General. He had not been present at that dinner; he had always been in opposition to the Board; he had got out a German river expert to criticize de Rijke in the hope of getting the work in German hands. Unanimity among the Legations in Peking was necessary for success; the Germans, if they liked, could block it; so I changed my course, crossed the Soochow Bridge and called on Dr. Knappe, the German Consul-General.

I told him exactly what had happened, including the brain wave that made me visit him before seeing Warren; that if I could not get him on my side I would give the matter up, for otherwise it would be useless. He read my draft, and then with some impatience said: 'Can you not see the difficulty I have in agreeing to this? The Commissioner may be of any nationality, but you and the Engineer-in-Chief are British and you are never changed; and, of course, you will use your position to further your nationals' interests. I cannot blame you for it; it is natural; but it is very disadvantageous for us.' To this I replied with genuine deep feeling: 'Dr. Knappe, really and truly you are wrong. So far as I 'm concerned my only fear would be that, to avoid a suspicion that I might be favouring my co-nationals, I might act unjustly to them.' Then Knappe got up from his chair and moved about the room with his fingers in his hair and used quite unintentionally a curiously biblical expression: 'Almost you persuade me! But it is incredible! It is impossible!'

In my other dealings with Knappe I had always found him eminently reasonable, and now he calmed down and agreed that some such scheme as mine was the only practicable one. He would tell the German Chamber, and I could go ahead at once. At the time I took the credit of persuading him to myself ; but later I had some reason to believe that a German —I think a member of his staff—had made about the same proposal.

Within a week the scheme was sent to the Legations with the unanimous approval of all those locally concerned. It was some years before it was put into operation. It is in force to-day, and believing, as I do, that in due course Shanghai will handle a larger trade than that of any other port in all the world and will require the greatest river engineering works to do it, I can look back with some complacence on the part I took in its creation.[1]

In 1902—as an offshoot of the Boxer peace protocol—came the revision of the commercial treaties with Great Britain under the leadership of Sir James Mackay, now Lord Inchcape ; there was a mass of stuff about Customs duties and other matters; and there was a searching for odds and ends of claims to be inserted—such an opportunity might never come again. I was in close touch with A. E. Hippisley at this time—a man of wisdom and great breadth of vision ; and by him I was kept informed of what was going on. In the draft convention I read that China undertook to remove the rocks that obstructed the approaches to Canton, as well as the artificial barriers which had been placed during the French and Japanese hostilities. Hippisley had done his best to get these impracticable clauses taken out, but without success. I was personally concerned because the onus of the work would most likely fall on me, so I approached Sir James directly, and in the end I struck a bargain with him. I would tell him of a port to open if he would delete the clause about the Canton rocks ; and that was how Wanhsien was opened. So the clause about the rocks was taken out, but about the barriers—massive structures of blocks of stone and steel screw piles—Sir James stood firm. Two years later I got brief instructions to consider what had best be done to meet the treaty stipulation. To remove the barriers would cost many million taels ; it would upset the regimen of the channels, and instead of helping navigation would seriously embarrass it. The interest in the matter was chiefly that of Hongkong shipping, so I called upon the Governor, Sir Mathew Nathan, and explained the situation about that silly clause. I suggested that I should widen the entrances through the two barriers, and with that done the question of the treaty clause should without formality be allowed to drop. In this and other matters I found the Governor most approachable and reasonable ; he had a clear vision of the matter and agreed.

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[1] This organization was preceded, as has been stated, by Hippisley's scheme. The genesis of that one was also curious, and, if not recorded here, is likely to be lost for ever.

Hippisley was a Treaty Commissioner and as such was in touch with Liu Kung-yi, the Nanking Viceroy. Old Liu was sick and very feeble—he died soon after ; but his mind was sharp as needles, and he was furious at the imposition of that annex, and not only on account of its perniciousness, but because, on a matter within his jurisdiction, he had not been consulted. So he begged Hippisley to do all he could to get the monstrosity removed and replaced by something else. Hippisley did his best, pulled all the strings he knew, and failed—the protocol was the price that China had to pay for peace. But later there came an incident that turned defeat to victory. It was found that, under the complicated taxation clauses of Hewett's scheme, certain properties would be taxed twice over, and to remedy this injustice the foreign ministers decided that those clauses should be interpreted in such and such a manner. Then Hippisley with fine perception saw the opportunity. He notified the Viceroy that, *as an instrument of the peace protocol*, the annex could not be amended ; it could only be amended by ordinary negotiation on equal terms. That argument was irresistible, and so Hewett's scheme was scrapped.

For that work I needed divers, and I had not any ; so I called on Admiral Noel at his office at the Naval Yard. He was in plain clothes, and he looked much more like a country squire than an admiral. Across the desk I told the story of my job and how I needed divers. He spoke, but not to me ; he spoke to himself and quite loudly : ‘ Ah !—an Englishman—and he comes to me for help—important operation—for a foreign Government too—and an Englishman to do it—a sailor too—h’m, h’m—yes, he deserves assistance.’ And then he let out a yell, which could have been heard half-way across the harbour ; it was for the signalman who was just outside the door. ‘ General Signal : Volunteer divers required for service under the Chinese Government.’ The Admiral now looked me in the face with a smile of wide benevolence and held out his hand to end the interview ; and all the time he never said a word to me.

While that work on the barriers was being done—it took a year or so—I interested myself in the bunding of the Canton frontage. Something had already been begun in haphazard fashion, but now I got it systematized and laid down lines of clean curved bund walls of several miles in length. There was a curious feature in this undertaking which, much more than the work itself, deserves recording. In about 1370 the conquering Ming dynasty ordered that the soldiers of the previous Mongol garrisons—the descendants of the famous hordes of Ghengis Khan—and their families should be slaughtered. At Canton there had been intermarriage and absorption in a century of Mongol rule, and enmity was dead, so there was reluctance to fulfil this drastic order ; consequently it was reported to the capital that they had been driven into the river, and by inference drowned. They were not drowned ; they were allowed to live in boats and in piled shacks below high-water line. And so they had lived and bred and grown for five hundred years and more, and it was no one's business to institute a change. These were the Tankas ; fine-looking men and pretty girls, from the latter of whom the famous flower boats drew their staff. Now, when I dealt with that matter of the bund, I found great areas of foreshore, the value of which reclaimed was needed for the project ; but these areas were studded thick with Tanka squatters. So I approached the high officials and pointed out that the time had come to remove the ban from these hard-treated and deserving people ; and it was done. There was money in the business, so that was why.

It is only the older generation who remember when in England there was railway time—which was Greenwich time —and local time, which differed in each town and village. Now in China we had local time, and it was Father Froc, the eminent Director of Siccawei Observatory, who made the suggestion that I attempt to get standard time adopted—a seven hours' difference from Greenwich for the coast, and six, five and four hours' differences for the interior.

It seems some undertaking, does it not? It would really be so in any other country and would require at least an act of Parliament. But in China, in those days,—well, let us see how it was done.

I wrote to the Inspector-General on the subject and explained how, if he approved and later would give the necessary instructions to the Service, I could arrange the whole affair informally, quietly and without publicity.

The Inspectorate approved. Over a cocktail at the Shanghai Club I discussed the matter with the foreign adviser of the Chinese telegraphs. Quite a sound idea, he thought; he would do his part and a week's notice would suffice. Then a visit to Tientsin to see the manager of the Peking railway—the only railway in the country at the time; and he concurred. Now came the question of Hongkong, with Canton sixty miles away; and there lay the only snag.

If coast time was established, Hongkong would sooner or later have to fall in line; but unless she did so willingly and concurrently there would be a lot of fuss and the undesired publicity, and the Peking Government would be incensed at the Customs undertaking such a matter. So I called on the Honourable the Harbour Master, a member of the Legislative Council, and on the Astronomer Royal—it is a fact that little Hongkong has one—as these would be the two that the Governor would look upon as experts on the subject; but I failed entirely to bring them to my side. The sailor-man—an Irishman and as stubborn as they make them—knew me well enough to say that he would see me go to hell before he would agree that a British colony should take a lead from China. The Astronomer—an old, old man—said that the change would affect the sequence, and thus the value of his twenty years' collection of observations of temperature and humidity. He was sorry but he could not possibly concur. It was an example in miniature of how big affairs are often dealt with.

I was disappointed but not downhearted. These two were the expert factors; the factor of common sense lay with the Chamber of Commerce, and would be reflected by the unofficial members of the Council. The problem was now to get them prompted with the facts.

My friend Hewett, the P. & O. agent, who had originated that detrimental scheme for the conservancy of the Whangpu river, was now stationed at Hongkong. I knew well the active nature of his mind, his imperviousness to reason, his love of leading in some new idea and his fondness for a speech. So I had him to dinner at the Club. I told him of my aim, of the facts about it, of the Astronomer and the Harbour Master; and I showed some measure of despondency. I did not ask for his assistance, nor mention the Chamber of Commerce or the unofficial members of the Council; but I filled him up with the technics of the matter—about zones of longitude and the rather complicated benefits that would result to typhoon warnings. I spoke of the history of the movement in the world; what America had done; the fact that distant Kashgar would be affected and that other states would follow suit. And so I left my seed in the fertile soil of Hewett's brain; and it was the last I ever saw of my active-minded friend.

I was working on the Canton barrier business at this time, and when I next paid a visit to Hongkong a friend said at the Club: 'That scheme of yours came up last week before the Chamber. Hewett made a perfectly marvellous speech about it. Where he manages to get his detailed facts, God only knows.'

So things had gone exactly as I planned—a rather snivvy business, but quite successful.

A few weeks later an I.G. Circular was issued ordering that on a certain date the clocks at customs houses should be altered in such and such a way. So as regards the coast the thing was done, and, as far as I remember, no reference to the fact was made in any paper. Subsequently the other zones were instituted; and daily from Shanghai was tapped out standard time to every telegraph station in the Empire.

Whether Japan was ahead of us in this I have forgotten; but the Malay Settlements and India followed suit. The Siamese Government, which I approached informally, declined to join the movement. To round off my ambition in this matter Siberia and Russia should have copied us ; but they did not, either then or later.

Is that the end of progress in the matter ? No. There must be one step more, but only one. You know that a cable sent from England will reach America at a date some hours before the sending of it. Well, it will not be in our time that we can fly the Atlantic at such a speed as to arrive before we left—as shown by standard time. But unquestionably this generation will make that journey at such a speed that time, as measured by the sun, will be nearly stationary ; and in a flight to China, a day—as measured by the sun—will be but little more than half a normal day. Thus for travellers' time-tables our present standard time will be a useless thing. It will be discarded for that purpose, and Universal or Greenwich Time will be used instead ; and later Universal Time will be in general use for all purposes except those which depend on light and darkness, such as hours of work and feeding and amusements. To meet those purposes the clocks will have a second hour hand, painted red perhaps, to indicate a Routine Time. With that extra hand each country, county, town or even village will be able to play about to its heart's content in saving daylight, and then will cease that cruel prostitution of real time, which now takes place.

VII

THE YANGTSZE DRAGON

In the early days of my appointment as Deputy Coast Inspector there occurred an episode which, owing to its length, I have delayed the telling of till now.

Sir Robert Hart telegraphed to the Shanghai Commissioner to this effect :—The Viceroy of Szechuen has appealed to the Central Government for assistance in respect to the great landslide which fell last year into the Upper Yangtsze near Wanhsien and formed a whirlpool in which over a thousand lives and hundred large junks have already been lost. The Central Government has called for my advice. Can the Engineer-in-Chief or Coast Inspector make any suggestion for action ?

Now the Engineer-in-Chief of that time was an elderly man. For many years his duties had been confined to lighthouse construction ; the problem of a whirlpool—over a thousand miles up the Yangtsze river—did not appeal to him, and he made no bones in saying it ; so he left the thing to Bisbee, who asked me what I thought about it.

It was then September. Low river would occur in January. The range of water level was very great—a hundred feet and more. Obviously what was needed was a study of the problem on the spot, one beginning as soon as possible and lasting until low river—a four months' job at least ; and whoever went should have authority to do what might prove possible in the period to ameliorate conditions for navigation. There was a huge traffic of native craft on that Upper Yangtsze, craft ranging from two-hundred-ton junks to small flimsy boats that did the downward passage only once and then were broken up for firewood ; there were no railways, no roads, to that rich province of Szechuen which lay some fifteen hundred miles from the coast; the Yangtsze was the only route for all its wealth of produce. Bisbee asked me would I go? I would go with the greatest eagerness if I could have authority to do what might prove possible while there. What would I need? A foreign diver and his gear; a Chinese blacksmith; steel bars for drills; two tons of dynamite; and an anchor—for I had read that anchors were unknown on the upper river—and funds to engage such labour as I needed.

That was how I, a sailor-man, started off on a Civil Engineering job, and nothing could have pleased me better.

Because of the dynamite that river steamers would not carry we travelled in a Chinese gunboat. Her Captain had the curious name of Zi Ziang-Zung. He was an old, old man; was mission educated all those years ago, was still a Christian, and had a library of good English books. He spoke of many things—of morals, philosophy and politics, and expressed his pleasure at an English conversation which for years he had not had. Then he told me of the famine in Szechuen and how girls were going cheap. Would I be so kind as to bring back six for him, so that he could sell them at a profit? He had served with Gordon when Soochow was taken and had not heard before that he was dead. According to his statement, he was Gordon's A.D.C.; he told of Gordon's rage when Li Hung-chang cut off the heads of the rebel leaders at Soochow, for whose safety Gordon's word was given; of how he accompanied Gordon in his search for Li to shoot him; and how, the heat of rage subsiding, the General confined himself to language quite unprintable, which Captain Zi detailed. I am told on good authority that his story was apocryphal. I wonder; it was so very circumstantial.

We reached Hankow, five hundred miles or so inland, and the limit of navigation for ocean steamers; and then the shallow changing channels of the Middle Yangtsze, with the uncanny fact that a rise of water level—say six feet—need not mean an increase in depth; for the river bottom rises and falls irregularly with the water level, due to the silt from the mountains in the West in its unknown steps of progress to the sea to form new islands and extend the coast.

At Ichang we reached the beginning of the Upper Yangtsze and—at that date—the limit of steam navigation, so we transhipped to native house-boats—kwatzes, and I said good-bye to Zi Ziang-Zung, whose last words were a hope that I would change my mind about the purchase of those famine girls.

We sailed and tracked on that great inland waterway ; hauled over rapids with a hundred coolies on the ropes—a stiff bamboo-plaited rope, which would only coil with bights that alternately were inside out. Mountains all the way with ranges transverse to the river ; so there are valleys running right and left, but never fore and aft. The river crosses them ; it pierces the chains of mountains by a set of narrow gorges, precipitous and tortuous. The river's age is greater than the mountains', so, as the latter slowly rose, the former kept its bed. Those massive limestone mountains, with their granite cores and basalt dykes, had been worn down and melted through as if they had been sugar. And every here and there are rapids, where a sudden drop occurs ; they are the steps, assisting navigation in between, though a nuisance in themselves.

Down the river come the junks with Szechuen produce—junks with crews of many scores of men. When the wind is fair they sail and there is silence ; but when they row, manning the great sculling oars on either side with their screw-like motion, they work to music. A boy's falsetto voice rings out the solo, and a hundred men, perhaps, rasp out the chorus. And in the gorges the reverberation from the cliffs makes this music something never to be forgotten. Those songs are centuries old, perhaps millenaries. They have been sung by father and son for untold generations on that river ; and junks that a century and more ago were hauled over the Kweilin Pass by windlasses on greasy slopes of clay and so reached Canton, taught these songs to British sailors, and thus were shanties born—so I maintain.

The rapids vary in their nature. Some are merely rushing broken waters, with tortuous channels through the rocks; this occurs where the rocky ridges are axial with the river. In other cases a ridge lies across the stream and forms a weir, through whose deepest part the main volume of the water flows as a smooth sloping tongue, convex to the sky, tapering to a point, and at that point wild turbulence of waters; and on one side, perhaps, a whirlpool, fatal to a craft of whatever size that gets within its toils. A junk comes down the river; she is in a placid reach with little current, for the depth is great, say fifty feet or more. Some distance off, the surface of the water has lost its continuity; it ends, strangely and unduly; it is the weir that forms a rapid. The sail was furled some time before; the sculls and sweep are manned and worked to a subdued accompaniment of 'Yi-ha, yi-ha.' The laodah stands tense at the loom of that great sweep; he is steering for the very centre of that tongue. Then he gives his order and frenzy reigns—a frenzy of effort and of voice, wild barbaric rhythmic shouts, accompanying the herculean efforts to get speed on the boat for that steerage-way on which depends their safety. That line approaches, that seeming precipice of waters; the junk's bow reaches the edge, her fore-foot is exposed; and then she tips and slithers down that oily slope. The laodah's aim is true; she rides the apex of that convex surface with its downward slope on either side; and with yells and wild waving of his long-sleeved arms, the laodah gives instructions for the working of the guiding sweep—great lusty pulls to right or left. On one side of that oily tongue are jagged rocks and on the other a gruesome whirlpool, with a vicious, moving, sucking vortex, down which smaller boats entire, with crews on board, can drop down as a floating fragment drops down the plug-hole of a bath, and in which the largest ones disintegrate. But our junk continues on the apex of the convex tongue until it reaches its pointed tip and enters the boiling turbulence of waters there; and all is well—the danger ended.

I have looked ahead a bit, for that rapid was the Hsin-lung-tan for which we were bound.

A fine crowd, those Yangtsze junkmen ; a race apart, with traditions of conduct going back to untold ages, and the chief of these is that traffic cannot stop. No matter what new danger may arise, it must be taken in the stride ; for thus has it always been. So when the landslide happened and formed a rapid worse than anything yet known, the downward junks tied up above, and the laodahs went to view the scene to see what they were in for. They knew that down that foul, sucking mouth, which moved about as if alive, a thousand lives had dropped the year before—men, women and children. Then, unhesitatingly, they shoved off to risk their lives. They could, of course, have left their families behind. They never did. To drown was better than to starve. Again I have looked ahead. Now let us go back to that upward passage.

In all the world it is a feature of a boat to have bilateral symmetry as regards its major axis ; that is to say, it is similar on each side of the keel. A catamaran is an exception to some degree, but its outrigger is a mere appurtenance and not part of the hull. It is reserved for the Fu-ho junks to form a unique exception to this rule. The deck at the bow is horizontal, but gradually it tilts to port until at the stern its tilt is forty-five degrees. The starboard corner of the counter is thus amidships above the rudder post, and forms an apex which serves as a bearing for a monstrous stern sweep, longer than the vessel, whose loom is worked from an elevated bridge amidships. It is as if a giant had taken in his hands an elastic junk and twisted the stern through forty-five degrees. I stayed for several hours where the Fu-ho joined the Yangtsze in an attempt to learn the object of this curious craft ; but the net result of all my efforts was merely this :—The Fu was a very curly river and a very curly boat was best suited to its navigation.

We had a guard boat in attendance with half a dozen soldiers in their ancient dress, the Commander living in a little box perched high above the counter, and in the bow was a little cast-iron cannon ; and when we landed for a walk a couple of those soldiers followed us. But once, when we took a walk without a guard, in the outskirts of a town, we suddenly found ourselves in an open space where students were competing with their bows and arrows as a feature in their archaic examinations, and our appearance was like a red rag to a bull. A herd instinct supervened, and those students came as one, with foul abuse, cries of ' Kill,' and stones. We retired, but did not run, not from any consideration of our dignity, but because it was safer to walk with backward rallies against those vicious students. Our path lay beneath a bluff, with a ravine on the other side, and from the houses on the bluff were thrown big stones—double-handed throws. We were hit by smaller ones, but reached our boat with only minor injuries, and then I notified the Magistrate that I required redress and would not leave until I had it, and that I would shortly come to see him. So he sent his chair and, as a palliating act, his own huge crimson umbrella. He returned my visit at two a.m.; I was awakened by the braying of the trumpets and then witnessed the bambooing of two culprits from those houses on the bluff.

But here at last was the Hsin-lung-tan. There was the scar where a young mountain-top had tobogganed down a greasy film that lay between two sloping limestone strata; and thus formed a groyne of monstrous blocks of stone that reached two-thirds across the river. In a portion of the gap lay the smooth tongue of convex water, like a bent fan with the point down-stream where the water boiled. The law of gravity seemed to be suspended; the water did not find its level; it was humped up higher in the middle—irregularly like a piece of warped veneer. On the left bank for several hundred yards the water ran up-river with a speed of several knots—four or five; and between that upward current and the tongue—caused by the two—there lay the gruesome whirlpool.

The summer previous a concave curve of shore with peaceful flow of water had lain where now stood that agglomeration of fallen boulders, and there was a farm or two and cultivation on the hillside, for here there was no gorge and at high river its width was half a mile or so. It was later that I learnt from levels that that summer rise had reached 170 feet, an exceptional amount of water being held up by the narrow gorge some distance down. Probably the saturation of the bottom of the greasy film between the strata had been the trigger that had launched the slide.

But now a young town had sprung up on that filled-up bay. A town of mat-sheds ; streets of them with a population of many thousands. The trackers alone ran into thousands, for a single junk would occupy four hundred to haul it up between the whirlpool and the groyne. There were shops, theatres, brothels, opium dens, hotels of sorts, a Prefect's yamen, and police—a little town, in fact. But like all these trackers' towns it was a thing of annual birth and growth and death, for at high river the site was submerged a hundred feet or more.

Hsin-lung-tan means New Dragon Rapid, and the Prefect, when he called, explained at once the reason for that name. In the story of the rapid's origin which followed, he professed his disbelief ; it was that of the ignorant, superstitious junkmen steeped in the fables of the past ; yet to ignore the opinion of the river population would be, he said, unwise. And so he told the story.

For untold ages there had been a dragon in the river whose only food was human corpses, and he had caused the various rapids as a means to get his sustenance. But of late years, greater care in navigation, and particularly the lifeboat service, had robbed him of his rightful meals. So in the deep water of the gorges on moonlight nights was heard the dragon's wail :—

I have no food, what shall I do ?
    Hi yeh ! Hi yah !
Those things I eat are now too few.
    Hi yah ! Mei yu fan-chih. (Nothing to eat.)

What shall I do ? I 'll tell you what.
    Hi yeh ! Hi yah !
I 'll drop a mountain in the pot.
    Hi yah ! Hao to fan-chih. (Plenty to eat.)

That wail was nothing new—for untold years these have been the words of a junkmen's shanty, and now the thing had come to pass. Thus the grounds for their belief; but the junkmen further say, and this is the important point, that with the thousand bodies he has eaten in the year, the dragon has grown a fiercer beast than ever; so much so that it will ill-brook interference. This rapid is bad enough. Who knows it better than the men who risk their lives in it? But they say they would rather have it as it is than risk a worse one made by the dragon if his food is stopped.

That, in effect, was the story I was told; but with far more fantasy of detail than I can now remember. The Prefect, I am sure, believed in it himself, though in deference to a foreigner's opinion he said it was based on the ignorant superstition of the junkmen.

So through the Prefect I sent a message to the people which was posted as a Proclamation. I would give the dragon all consideration; I could not, even if I would, obliterate the rapid; my orders were to examine and report, though I had authority to do what might prove possible to render navigation safer. As to dynamite, it would be used mainly to break the boulders on the groyne. I would remove that groyne to low-river level, so that at next high-river the current would get a chance to scour away some more. On the right-hand bank, opposite the groyne, I would cut a channel through the rock that would even out the slope of water and enable upward junks to track with safety. For downward junks I could provide no improvement of conditions until next season, when nature would have added its assistance. Further, I would do no heavy blasting in the pool below, where the dragon dwelt, and thus the beast would have no cause for grievance.

The people gathered round the Prefect's Proclamation and discussed it. But an old junk laodah uttered 'Hau,' which indicated acquiescence and so tipped the scale in active favour of the work. A few days later the village caught on fire, and several hundred houses were destroyed, and people rendered homeless and in distress. This gave an opportunity for a substantial gift of money, which added to the favourable auspices for beginning operations.

Then began recruiting ; and in a week or so we had two thousand men, and later more. Mostly they were for mere coolie-work—carrying stone ; the rest were masons and these were taught rock-drilling. Our blacksmith made the drills and was kept busy with re-shaping and re-sharpening them ; there were foremen of the coolies and gangers of the stone-cutters, each with his distinctive coloured badge—a turban or an armlet, so that they could be recognized ; there were food contractors for this crowd, and, of course, they tried to cheat the men, until the Prefect had a culprit publicly bambooed.

Szechuen is a very wealthy province but it produced great quantities of opium—the white and pink and purple of the poppy fields was a striking feature of the country—so the coolie class was opium-ridden, and consequently poor and underfed, and ophthalmic and scrofulous and lousy ; yet they were a cheery good-natured lot, amenable, industrious and appreciative of decent treatment. Their life must have been one long and weary itch ; but it may be that they thought it worth it for the pleasure scratching gave them. Where with western navvies one would give at intervals ten minutes for a smoke, our routine board showed ten minutes for a scratch. When the gong beat for that interval, the spread crowd coalesced in squatting strings like monkeys, each man scratching another's back ; and there was great contentment on their faces.

We lived in our house-boats tied up to the left bank above the rapid. The Scotsman—a cruiser engineer—was in charge of rock removal from the groyne. The diver—from whom diving work was not required—had charge of the making of the channel on the other shore for upward junks. This merely meant the cutting of an even slope for a foot or two below low-river level, so that when the water rose some feet, junks could pass up in safety where they had never passed before. Near the centre of the river on the edge of the fall and bordering one side of the sloping tongue of water was exposed a rock. In size it was about thirty feet square with a height of some six feet above low river. I proposed to shatter it as thoroughly as my means permitted and trust to scour to remove the debris ; thus the downward channel would be widened. This work I made my special task. I was told that no one had ever landed on the rock, and that work there would be quite impossible owing to the danger of access to it ; but that was because they did not understand the purpose of an anchor. It is curious that an anchor is an article unknown among that Upper Yangtsze traffic ; and I blessed my foresight in providing one. With some difficulty a boatman was persuaded to meet my needs; we drifted down towards the rock, dropped my heavy anchor some fifty feet above it—and the fall—in six fathoms ; then another boat, powerfully manned, brought a bamboo rope, one end of which was fastened to the shore. To drop down to the rock in a third boat and fix thereto another rope was now an easy matter ; so there we were on that hitherto untrodden rock on the edge of what seemed like a waterfall.

We scaled it down to a foot or so above low-water level and built a rampart round it to prevent fluctuations of the level interfering with the work, and then we drilled holes six feet deep and five apart, which took several weeks to do. We filled those holes with dynamite—about five hundred pounds in all—and fitted electric fuses and then wired up, a single cable leading to the shore, for I used an earth return as in naval mining. Now there are ways of knowing all about an electric circuit of this kind ; what its resistance is and the amount of current needed, and lastly a means of testing whether all is right, so that when the key is pressed one knows for certain the result. I had this knowledge and the means, but when I made my tests I found a phenomenal resistance which my current could not overcome. I racked my brain to find the cause but failed.

A feature of the situation was that great preparations had been made. Within a circuit of five hundred yards all had been warned to shelter and the junks had been evacuated ; the local gentry for miles around had come to see the show ; my little world was looking on in expectation, and now I was confronted with this miserable fiasco.

The unexplained resistance was plainly that due to the return current by the water, and had there been another length of cable a double circuit would have met the case ; but there was not. A length of bare wire would have served, but I had not got that either. So the only way to avoid the great fiasco was to double the cable between the rock and the boat, and to press the button in the latter. It happened that there were some planks available, and with them a small pent-house on the boat was rapidly arranged to give some shelter.

To fire that charge of five hundred pounds at a distance of a hundred feet may appear to have been folly. There was risk, of course, but not as much as most would think. I had already had an experience, when breaking up a boulder, of a premature explosion caused by a defective time fuse ; I was within a few feet of it at the time and was not touched. There is a sort of safety zone within the immediate neighbourhood ; the stones fly up and outwards, but not sideways as a rule. And I judged my boat would be within that safety zone.

Facing the rock I lay beneath that little pent-house with the key in front of me. I knew that what I was doing was exceptional, that few would risk the confidence in estimated chances to do this thing for such a reason—to avoid a loss of face—and the thought exhilarated me. I enjoyed the situation and lingered to get its savour to the full. I have known what fear is, as I have told before ; but here there was no fear, only the pleasurable excitement as of cross-country riding, when one takes an unknown jump.

Let me tell too of a curious matter connected with this affair. Doubtless many know, but I have never seen it said, that in certain experiences duration moves with extraordinary slowness. I have seen some heads cut off by Chinese executioners, and to me the movement of the sword and its passage through the neck has been just like a slow-motion picture on a cinematograph. And so, when I pressed the button, the minute fraction of a second that passed before the rock hove up was most curiously elongated in duration, and the heave itself and the movement of the flying fragments was a slow-motion picture.

My judgment proved correct ; and doubtless there was also luck, for though small fragments rattled on my shelter the heavy pieces curved over and beyond me. One of them killed an old lady in a junk five hundred yards away, who had refused to leave her cabin.

So that was that ; and shortly afterwards I realized my error. Obsessed by the practice of an earth return in naval mining, I had overlooked the fact that while sea water is a good conductor fresh water is a bad one.

It has been said that all my little world was looking on in expectation, and that what I did was to avoid a loss of face ; but this was much more than a mere personal affair. A failure, even a temporary one, might have meant a serious loss of confidence. I had been most uncomfortably embarrassed by the wondrous powers which rumour gave me. It was said I had tame ducks trained to dive and place dynamite where directed, and that I had an instrument which, pointed at a rock, would pulverize it ; so to fail in a simple matter might have been seriously unfortunate.

The work went on successfully. The channel on the right bank was cut and used before we left. On the groyne over two thousand men were working like a lot of ants, and they cut it down to near low-water level.

In the meantime the dragon put in an appearance. I was working on the central rock and saw that there was great excitement on the groyne. When we met—the three of us—at lunch time the Scotsman said : ‘ You won’t believe what I am going to tell you, but I have seen that bally dragon.’ He had only seen its head—a monstrous snout some six feet long with a tubular mouth like a fire-engine suction pipe. Then my ‘ boy ’ appeared and with great excitement told how he had also seen the beast—and he had seen its tail. I knew the fish from their description ; I had seen them in the market at Ichang, six feet and more in length. It was said that they were sturgeon, though they differ from the Amur fish.

I never saw the creature ; I watched for hours in vain ; but it appeared occasionally round about the whirlpool for a period of some weeks. The Chinese swore it was the body-eating dragon that had caused the rapid ; and undoubtedly it must have been a monster fish. The conclusion that I came to was that it was not less than thirty feet in length ; and sturgeon of that size are recorded as existing in the Amur river.

Now it is impossible to say what goes on in the mind of an educated Chinese about an affair like this. Credulity, with which we are all either gifted or afflicted, is his to a very high degree. So the Prefect telegraphed to the Viceroy of Szechuen reporting the advent of the dragon ; and the answer, when it came, was translated to me. It was very long, and in effect it said :—The Prefect was commended for making the report—for realizing how important this affair might be. The matter had been referred to the Literary Chancellor, who had reported that the archives of the province showed that a similar event had occurred in olden times ; that then a noted sage had laid down the ceremony to be performed to exorcize the dragon; and the Literary Chancellor recommended that the same procedure should be followed now. With this the Provincial Government concurred and now directed the Prefect as to the details of the function. The Literary Chancellor was engaged upon composing a propitiatory prayer, and commissions were being prepared for the Prefect and Mr. Tyler to act as chief Sacrificers to the dragon. In the meantime no notice should be taken of it, but as soon as the document arrived the ceremony should take place.

Then came the extraordinary end to these instructions : ‘ When this ceremony has been performed, the dragon, if it is a sensible beast, will go down to the sea from whence it came, but if it does not do so, you are to request Mr. Tyler to take prompt steps to remove it by Western methods, and the local militia armed with spears and guns is to be placed at his disposal for this purpose.’

I rather fear this story. It sounds made up, but actually its seeming improbabilities were greater than I tell. It is understated rather than overstated. A commission for a foreigner to be a Sacrificer was probably unique ; but there is this to be remembered. My appointment, in effect, was from the Central Government. In the despatches to the Viceroy my rank and decorations would be mentioned—the Blue Button, the Peacock’s Feather and the Double Dragon. The cause of the ceremony was the work of which I was in charge; the nature of the ceremony was archaic even from a Chinese point of view and called for punctilious adherence to an ancient etiquette; and so I was included. But I did not act as Sacrificer. There may have been later instructions from the Viceroy on the subject—I never knew—but the ceremony was performed without me. In excuse it was explained that I had been misinformed about the time—for which a messenger was punished—and it was nominally assumed that my non-appearance was due to unwillingness to act.

It was said that the dragon never came again and that the sacrifice had been successful; but there may have been another explanation. The rising river stopped our season's work. Of our stock of dynamite there remained four hundred pounds; there were objections to either storing it or shipping it, so I used it for a purpose which, while it might be useful, would have spectacular effect. I made a mine and buoyed it and let it drift until it caught below a rocky ledge immediately above the rapid; then fired it. The great column of water impressed the people vastly, and the shock of the explosion impressed, no doubt, the dragon. The explosion being above the rapid and sheltered by the ledge, the shock would not be transmitted to the whirlpool with sufficient strength to stun the monster, though many fish five feet or so in length floated on the surface.

I had been strongly tempted to fire that mine below the fall and so kill or stun the beast if it was there. But I had promised when the work began that I would not do so; and I had also to think of its continuance next season.

VIII

THE BOXER REBELLION

1. THE BOXER TIME

In January of 1898 I was working at that rapid in Szechuen, and one day an educated Chinese asked had I any knowledge of what was happening in the province. The word had been passed around—but no one seemed to know its origin—that those ancient stocks of arms, which had been hidden since the Taiping days, should now be unearthed, furbished and made ready—and that was being done, though no one seemed to know the purpose.

This purpose was soon made clear, for shortly afterwards a rebellion[1] broke out in the province, and the Imperial troops sent to suppress it suffered disastrous defeats during '98 and '99. The secret societies with which China has always been permeated, had sent out their threads of fermentation and it was spreading in a favourable medium. There was good reason for it. The humiliation of China's defeat by Japan and the loss of the Liaotung Peninsula and Formosa in '95 had been intensified in '98 by the German occupation of Tsingtau, the Russian of Port Arthur and Talienwan, the French of Kwang-chow-wan, and the British of Weihaiwei and the Kowloon extension. But when in the early months of '99 Italy also demanded a naval station at Sanmen Bay, and the demand was resisted and was withdrawn, a thrill of martial pride was felt throughout the Empire. That emotion was a passing phase, but augmented the increasing anti-foreign feeling of the country. Concurrently there was the sense that for these disastrous blows at China's pride an alien dynasty was responsible; so on the one hand there was the clamour for its downfall and on the other for its reform. Then Kwanghsü, the young Emperor—led by Kang Yu-wei—embraced the latter purpose with the madness of a bull in a china shop ; the Manchu nobles and the heads of Government became alarmed ; the Empress Dowager resumed the reins of power and commenced her drastic measures for the extermination of reformers.

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[1] Known as the Yü Man-tze rebellion.

Yes, there was cause for fermentation ; and it spread—just a general fermentation—with many nuclei of different characters and different aims ; some anti-dynastic, some anti-Christian, some anti-foreign ; so that during the year of 1899 there were open disturbances all over China—brigandage, rebellion, and the slaughter of converts. The old Empress Dowager feared—and with good reason—that it might be the beginning of the end for the Manchu dynasty ; sooner or later the streams of disturbance would coalesce in one great torrent, and what channel would it take ? It must be one of two—anti-foreign or anti-dynastic. There is some surmise in that, but now for facts.

In May 1899 the Empress Dowager issued an Edict, bellicose in nature, referring to the menacing attitude of Germany. Tsingtau, which the Germans occupied, was in Shantung, so in that province the anti-foreign feeling was particularly strong. Its Governor was Yü-hsien, a Manchu, an Imperial clansman, a special favourite of the Empress Dowager, a strong opposer of reform and noted for his hatred of the foreigner. In September—in his province—and inspired doubtless by that Edict—a fresh nucleus of disturbance formed ; a sect which had the motto on its banners, 'Cherish the Dynasty, exterminate the Foreigners,' and who, owing to a mystic, frenzied gesturing to render them invulnerable, gave themselves the name of Ihochuan or Boxers. And Yü-hsien actively and openly encouraged them in their hostility to missionaries and other foreigners and in their slaughter and pillaging of converts. It can hardly be doubted that from the beginning of the Boxer movement with its motto so favourable to her cause, the Empress Dowager decided that to back them would result in a lesser evil than opposing them ; not that she expected that they would exterminate the foreigners, but just that it was the lesser evil at the moment. As for the rest, she trusted to her skill and luck ; and her faith was justified. The dynasty would have fallen had the movement been against it ; whereas, when the inevitable occurred and Peking was captured by the Western armies, she fled and left her capital and the neighbouring provinces to their fate ; and, in due course, returned in state and was fawned on by the ladies of the legations ; and Americans, who had tea with her, mouthed the words ‘ Her Gracious Majesty ’ as if they tasted nice. A very clever woman was Yehonala.

At Shanghai we watched with fear the growing of the situation ; for a time the virus of the Boxers infected even servants and our office boys ; and when surveying in the neighbourhood I was threatened by a band of soldiers and escaped with difficulty. However, the Viceroys on the Yangtsze kept their heads, ignored the anti-foreign Edict, and executed Boxers in their provinces. But in June we, at Shanghai, could not tell how far this conflagration was going to spread. There were men-of-war in harbour, our volunteers got busy, and later foreign forces came. It was just before the Chinese soldiers joined the Boxers in Peking that we formed our Customs company and added another hundred men—a lusty crowd—to the battalion.

The Chinese fleet was in the north ; and my friend Basse was with it as Superintending Engineer. Naturally it was looked upon with some suspicion. Basse was ordered by the German Admiral to leave it, but did not do so and was threatened with arrest. The British seized a torpedo boat and kept it ; the Russians threatened to remove the breech blocks from the ships, but did not do so. The fleet, however, was so obviously innocuous, and the expressed intentions of the Admiral and Captains so favourable to law and order, that they were left alone. And Sah, always seeking—as has been said before—for the right thing to do, was protecting missionaries at Tengchowfu.

The German Minister had been killed, when paying a visit to the Chinese Foreign Office; the soldiers had been unleashed to join the Boxers in their attack on the legations; the Empress Dowager—losing her head for a time in the frenzy of the business—had issued an Edict for the killing of all foreigners within the Empire; Admiral Seymour's first attempt to relieve the legations had failed; things were at their very worst, when the Chinese fleet steamed up the Whangpu river and anchored off Shanghai. There was, of course, excitement and apprehension; but I knew those Captains well: they were as mild as milk and never wished to see a drop of blood again. I heard that they were holding a meeting at the Naval Club in Hongkew and I walked in on them; it was the first time I had met them since the war. 'Gentlemen, I claim to be one of you and to take part in your discussion.' They were all over me with thanks and requests for guidance; they had been ordered down by Yuan Shih-kai, the Governor of Shantung—who had replaced Yü-hsien and who had done his best, though it was not much, to oppose the Boxer madness; but they had no instructions what to do; the Admiral was not with them and they were eager for advice. So I told them off at once to call in pairs upon the Consuls. I made them learn a little speech: how they had been ordered to Shanghai; their wish to take part in the preservation of law and order; their suggestion that a company of their bluejackets join the military demonstration—naval companies and the volunteer battalion—that was to take place on the morrow. Then I called on the Senior Consul, urged that this be done, and pointed out the wisdom of keeping the Chinese fleet under foreign influence. But it was too late. The Consuls had held their meeting and had decided to use pressure to get the Chinese ships to go; they had already taken steps and could not retrace them. It was a pity, though as things turned out it did not matter; but it might have done so.[1]

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[1] This exchange of letters with the Chinese Commander-in-Chief may be of interest:—

25th June, 1900.—DEAR ADMIRAL YEH, You know the friendship I have for you and your officers—that I identify myself with you; and you may imagine how anxious I am that in this serious crisis the Chinese fleet should act on lines that will conduce to its honour as well as to the best interests of your country. The seriousness of the situation lies in the fact that the initial successes of a bloodthirsty and ferocious fanaticism will lead not

It was June the 4th when the legations appealed for help; Admiral Seymour started on the 10th on the gallant but ineffectual attempt to relieve them. It was not until the 4th August that the allied expedition advanced from Tientsin and entered Peking ten days later. There were no Germans with that expedition. About the middle of September, when all the essentials had been done, the German Field Marshal Count von Waldersee arrived upon the scene and, there being nothing else to do, occupied himself with punitive expeditions involving among other things the senseless destruction or defacement of many ancient monuments.

Now at the time that the German expedition was steaming up the coast, I went out in a Revenue cruiser to see that all was well with a new deep entrance to the Yangtsze, which might be of use to men-of-war in case of trouble up the Yangtsze. Somewhat to my astonishment I found a large German cruiser, the *Brandenburg*, had entered by that channel and was at

only the common people but also many officials to believe that the Boxer programme will be carried out, and the foreigners driven into the sea. It is only men who know the power of Western nations—like yourself—who will realize the utter futility of the attempt; the whole world is against it. The Boxers and the officials, officers and soldiers who join them, are greater enemies to their own country than they are to the foreigner. True patriotism lies in putting down this madness and substituting sanity. I see clearly that your proper course is not merely to look on and be passive, but to take such action as may be possible to combat the spread of the Boxer movement. You must, however, expect that at Shanghai the collection of your fleet will be looked upon with some suspicion. The Consuls, I am sure, know how you and your Captains are on the side of law and order, but the community generally is liable to be apprehensive; and, when you remember that your Government itself has grossly violated the sacred rights of diplomats, it is not much to be surprised at. . . .'

'H.I.M.S. *Hai Yung*, Off Taku Bar, 4th July, 1900.—My dear Mr. Tyler, Many thanks for your kind and considerate letter. My duty with this fleet is to maintain friendly relations with all foreign powers and to be on the side of law and order. The Captains under my command know well how to carry out my instructions. The ships which entered Shanghai harbour were for coaling only. They are now distributed along the Yangtsze valley to protect the lives and property of foreigners. The *Haichi* was at Miautau last week and had all the Tengchow missionaries on board for safety. She towed the American battleship *Oregon*, which had struck on a pinnacle rock between Howki and Miautau Island, out of danger. The *Hai Yung* is detained here by the Admirals of the foreign powers, so the situation of myself is most unfortunate. The insane action of our Government is one of a most peculiar character. I hope the final settlement will soon arrive, but the terms will be a very difficult question. . . .'

anchor. As we approached her I could see that my little gunboat—it flew the dragon ensign and a pennant—attracted much attention. Then there fluttered signal flags, and before they could be read a blank charge was fired. The signal read : ‘ Anchor instantly, I have something important to communicate.’ We did not anchor, but rounded to and stemmed the tide ; then came a steam cutter with an officer—his moustaches bristling with the importance of a quasi-act of war. He gave a message from his Captain that we were to stay where we were until his further wishes were conveyed to us. Captain Myhre told him who and what we were and what our immediate purpose was. Then I joined in. I asked him to convey a message to his Captain that I was on board in the execution of my duties, and that I protested against being delayed except for some adequate reason. The officer showed astonished indignation. ‘ Protest ! You send the word protest to the Captain of a German man-of-war ? ’—‘ Yes, please, and I ’ll thank you to deliver it.’ That boat left, and shortly after another came with a message that we might proceed, but without an explanation. And now the *Brandenburg* flew a three-hoist signal—‘ Pass,’ ‘ Regret,’ ‘ Stop, I wish to communicate ’ ; so once again we stopped, much puzzled by the signal, and once more a boat arrived. The officer explained that the signal was intended to convey regrets that we had been stopped, but the signalman had made an error ; he added that the *Brandenburg* had been instructed to stop all Chinese gunboats and that they did not know we were a Customs cruiser.

That first messenger had been a bumptious fool, but otherwise there was nothing to complain about ; and I thought no more about it. But several years later I was talking to a German naval officer, and he told me he was on board the *Brandenburg* when that episode occurred, and of the cruel sequel to it. It seems that the Kaiser had personally given orders to the Captains of the expeditionary squadron about discretion and behaviour, and that his interest was such that he read copies of their log-books. In that of the *Brandenburg* he read of the failure to distinguish a Customs cruiser ; of the blank charge that had been fired; of the protest I had made, and lastly of the error in the signal; and he dismissed the Captain from the service.

2. THE METAMORPHOSIS OF BASSE

The legations at Peking had been relieved, the Boxer uprising quelled, and the Empress Dowager had taken refuge some three hundred miles away up the valley of the Yellow river. Military operations were now of a punitive character only, ranging, according to the nationality concerned, from the meting out of just punishment to mere sacking, general ravaging, and the senseless destruction or defacing of ancient monuments.

It was during this state of affairs that my friend Basse, the Superintending Engineer of the Chinese fleet, had occasion to travel from the coast to Peking on some official business of the Admiral. There was no going by train, now in purely military hands, so he rode the hundred-odd miles accompanied by a mafoo and a spare mount. The countryside through which he rode, doing his forty miles or so a day, was being ravaged at the time by Cossacks, the innocent and the harmless killed and worse for the guilt of others. There was no road. The way was across country over a plain for the whole distance. Basse gave a wide berth to the scenes of burning and pillaging; but suddenly he came across a party of Cossacks and a young peasant girl. His description of how he rescued that girl was inadequate, but this much I gathered. The dozen or so of Cossacks were dismounted; their ponies near by, reins trailing. They showed no alarm on the approach of Basse, for they must have heard and seen the single traveller and his mafoo for some time. Rather, as he approached the scene, was there a leering invitation to watch the entertainment.

A few low words passed between Basse and his mafoo; then he approached the ring within which lay the whimpering girl, shriekless as from a nightmare terror but as yet not materially harmed. He approached—still mounted—the circle at the side farthest from the Cossacks' ponies and pushed through, as if in eager response to the implied invitation. Basse was travelstained; he grew at that time a short untidy beard of two diverging tufts; his appearance was rough and uncouth; his lanky six-foot body on a small Mongolian pony—he rode with very long stirrups—gave him the appearance of a Don Quixote; the general impression he would give was one of harmlessness, and this doubtless was a factor in his reception.

Suddenly came a yell from the mafoo, who was slashing and stampeding the Russians' ponies. In the moment of the Cossacks turning to see what was up Basse had his chance. Picking up the slip of a girl by a handful of her clothes, he slung her across his saddle and galloped off, a crop of high-growing kaoliang protecting him and the mafoo from being aimed at for the first few moments. They were chased for miles by and under fire from the enraged and baffled Cossacks; but got away untouched.

The girl was taken all the way to Peking, because, as Basse said, to leave her elsewhere would be to expose her to a similar danger, and he did not like a half-finished job. At Peking he found her a safe refuge, and then doubtless, for a time, he thought little about it except as one satisfactory incident in a gruesome journey.

The affair, judged by any standard, was remarkable enough—the sudden confrontation, the instant weighing of risks and the vision of a plan, the brief instruction to his groom, and then the execution; but it was infinitely more remarkable when one considers the man as he had been—quiet and shy, good-natured to the point of apparent weakness, peaceful and giving way in any dispute, slow in his movements and hesitating in his decisions—and now this. What happened was, of course, a prompting from a hitherto unknown latency; and with the inspiration automatic action.

The life of Ludwig Basse was to some extent interwoven with my own. He was a Prussian. As far as I knew, he was of comparatively humble birth and had performed his service in the German navy as an engine-room warrant officer; his education was that of his class and he showed no sign of any special abilities. He was a tall lanky man, with a trim torpedo beard, very humorous blue eyes, an awkward and intensely shy manner with strangers, and a stubborn taste in collars, very low stand-up ones, from which, with far too much spare space, a long thin neck protruded.

I had no liking for things German, a feeling originating in my experiences as a small boy in a German school;[1] it was not usual for a deck officer and an engineer officer to be close friends, and his social outlook differed greatly from mine; but, for whatever reason, that close friendship grew—perhaps there was the unconscious recognition of kindred spirits for adventure. It was not until later that I was to learn the full extent of my friend's qualities, his utter fearlessness, his enterprise, his honesty in word and deed, his generosity and his modesty. Basse—a Prussian—was one of nature's gentlemen and a gallant one at that.

I have already told of how he joined the fleet at Weihaiwei, was damaged by a torpedo boat's propeller and was sent away. Thus the war served him no useful purpose except that it resulted, later, in his obtaining the appointment of Superintending Engineer to the fleet. His age at the time of the episode with the girl was about thirty-five.

After the war—as already told—some millions of taels were collected from the maritime provinces to form the nucleus of a naval fund for the purchase of a new fleet. It was my aim to prepare myself for developments in this connection. But it was for Basse, not for me, to be concerned in a minor way in the spending of that fund. The Empress Dowager misappropriated it for the purpose of renovating her palaces, and Basse's services were used in the installation of electric light there and in the provision of weird dragon motor craft for the palace lakes.

How Basse's exploit in saving the peasant girl came to the ears of Yuan Shih-kai was not told me; but what he said was repeated. Yuan was then Governor of Shantung at his capital of Chinanfu. It was in his province that the Boxers originated and were supported by his predecessor Yü-hsien. He had done what was possible to suppress them; he had done what he could to prevent the Empress Dowager from supporting them. This was not due to any regard for the foreigner but owing to the certain knowledge of disaster to his country which must result from that support. At the time of hearing of Basse's deed his feeling against the foreigners must have been bitter indeed. That they should make war to relieve the legations; that they should punish those guilty, however severely, for an unprecedented outrage, he would understand. Had it been the Japanese who had ravaged, he would have understood it also, for in similar circumstances would he not have ordered the same? But that the Westerners, or some of them, with their vaunted Christianity, should prove to be actually the barbarians they had always been named, had come as a disgusting shock to him; and now this story of a foreigner, and not only of a foreigner but of a German, one of the nationality that had been among the worst offenders in barbarity.

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[1] When I was eight my father took a two years' chaplaincy at Freiburg in Baden to ease the sudden change from affluence to poverty.

I can imagine, from my later knowledge of Yuan Shih-kai, that for a considerable pause after the tale he would remain silent, his eyes with their curious inward-looking appearance of concentrated thought, and then he would rap out his decision:—

'If I had heard of a foreigner risking his life for the sake of a Chinese lady of position, I should have thought nothing about it. I should have believed he did it for what he could make out of it; but, when I hear of one who seriously risks his life to save the honour of a peasant girl, I know that there must be much good in him, and, if he will allow me to do so, I will make his fortune for him. Send him a message that I wish to see him.'

Yuan Shih-kai, who at that time was transferred to Tientsin as Viceroy of Chihli, the metropolitan province, wished Basse to give up his naval appointment and attach himself to his Yamen on a handsome salary. Now happened the extraordinary metamorphosis of my friend. It seems as if from the moment of his exploit with the girl he had been re-made in character; from the chrysalis of his former super-modest self he emerged and spread wings of vast self-reliance and ambition;

he acquired quite suddenly, as if by inspiration, a remarkable judgment, a breadth of vision, a confidence in himself, and an uncanny knowledge of the Chinese official mind that was phenomenal. That he had hitherto no ambition, that he had taken no care to prepare himself for possible eventualities is quite certain ; he did not even take the trouble to learn the language, when for some five years he lived at close quarters with English-speaking Chinese officers. But what he must have unconsciously acquired during those years was a deep insight into the Chinese mind. So remarkably did he afterwards show that gift that it is not a wild hypothesis to imagine it a manifestation of far-fetched atavism due to an ancestress on the eastern plain of Europe giving birth in the thirteenth century to a half-caste child after the horde of Batu Khan had passed.

In spite of the Viceroy being the most powerful satrap in China, with a greater future confidently foretold for him, Basse refused his apparently tempting offer on the grounds, as he told me, that it would too much restrict his freedom and not give him sufficient scope. He reminded the Viceroy that, as an officer in the fleet, his services were anyhow at His Excellency's disposal, and that, while he would gladly accept a monthly retaining fee of two hundred taels, he declined to take more.

Whether Basse at that time consciously foresaw the result of his decision, or to what extent it may have been due to the risk of becoming, in effect, an A.D.C. with social duties which he would hate, cannot be stated. The easiest explanation is that it resulted from another inspiration. The justification of his policy came rapidly. On a visit, on behalf of Yuan Shih-kai, to old Chou-fu, the Governor of Shantung, Basse found himself offered a similar retainer for similar occasional services; and shortly afterwards Tuan Fang, the Manchu Viceroy at Nanking, did the same. It may be assumed that these appointments were made at Yuan Shih-kai's suggestion. So here was Basse launched on his new life.

It was not long before he found his hands full of affairs placed in them by one or the other of those officials. I knew but little of them apart from those in which, through Basse, I myself took part. Such, for example, was an attempt to attain a co-ordinated and efficient organization for the control of the Yellow river, in place of the independent triple control existing; another was the reorganizing of the Chinese navy; a third—on behalf of Viceroy Tuan Fang—was the little problem of bimetallism for China. There were others, but these suffice for examples.

Now how was it possible that Basse, with his general lack of any special knowledge, could have served usefully in such matters? The answer to that apparently difficult question is, in reality, quite simple. In recent years, advisers to the Chinese Government have been specialists strictly confined to their own technicalities; but formerly there existed here and there foreigners attached to provincial Yamens, who would advise on any subject under the sun. They were not necessarily frauds; Viceroys and Governors were always learned men in their own Chinese field, but on some matters they—of the old school—were colossally ignorant, and the temptation to give advice to them on a modicum of knowledge was not inconsiderable. The influence that these advisers exercised, however great they believed it, was usually negligible. Those old officials were great judges of character; they would listen patiently and apparently attentively, for they had certain uses for these men, and it was through their sense of self-importance that the best of those services could be obtained. It was in this respect that Basse stood out as an exception. His attitude was that he himself had no technical knowledge, but that he had friends who either could give the information needed or could put him on to some one else who would serve. And thus, unlikely as it at first appeared, this marine engineer became a valued adviser on certain affairs of State to a number of high officials. He became, too, as far as that was possible, their personal friend. With these satraps he had an ease of manners contrasting curiously with his shy awkwardness elsewhere. Doubtless this was a reflex of their own regard for him; and in that regard the quality of his laugh and his humorous twinkling eyes may quite well have been a factor, for the Chinese are peculiarly susceptible to such things ; but above all, it was his uncanny understanding of Chinese mentality, his ability to see their point of view, that was the foundation of his influence.

It must not be thought that his activities were confined to the obtaining of the advice or services of others. As his knowledge of Chinese affairs grew, he initiated policies of his own, and was entrusted with delicate inter-provincial political missions in turbulent times, in the performance of which he ran many risks. Basse operated from behind the screen—as the Chinese say. He never came into the foreign limelight, and even his existence was little known in the concessions.

The central feature of this story is, of course, Basse's exploit of saving the peasant girl and the resulting curious metamorphosis of the man. As a background to the picture, a short account of his previous life has been given. As a foreground, as it were, are now added some disconnected fragments.

Basse had received some high decorations ; it was now decided that he should be given rank. There was more than one precedent for appointing a soldier to be Admiral, but apparently to make an Admiral of a ship's engineer would stretch a point too far, so they made him a full-blown General. Then came the impending audience of Basse with the Empress Dowager. He was to be presented, not as a valued foreigner but as a Chinese official whose rank entitled him to it, an event unprecedented, perhaps, since the fifteenth century, when the highly ranked Jesuit Fathers were *personae gratae* at the Court.

At such an audience the occasion entitled him to hand in a memorial on affairs of State. On this point Basse came down to Shanghai to consult me. At that time the disintegrating forces against China were steadily accumulating. The defeat of China by Japan ; the tragedy of the Boxer rising ; foreign annexations ; the threat of partition ; and the continuance, if not the increase, in official corruption : these loomed over the situation as portents of coming disaster. Already one heard young officials of foreign and especially American education talk of revolution, of the virtues of Republicanism, and one heard glib views of representative Government and the advantages of this and that country's constitution. These young officials shut their minds to arguments that China's existing form of Government was not merely the only one suited to her, but was perhaps, in principle, the best the world had produced, and that all that was necessary and safe was to purge it of the corruption with which it was infected.

In my little house, facing the racecourse at Shanghai, Basse and I sat discussing this matter. We were not taking ourselves very seriously; we laughed at our occasional Gilbertian earnestness, but there seemed to be sporting chances which deserved consideration. It was obvious that none of the so-called reforms already effected or discussed could avoid the coming disaster. The main source of China's evil was in the Imperial palace itself. As in Russia at that time, reform, if possible at all, could only be effected from the top downwards. That this was so no one realized more than the Viceroys, though it was a subject that barely admitted whispering about between friends. Memorials to the throne by censors were occasionally of a drastically critical nature with bold condemnation of evils and petition for redress. It was part of the traditional constitution to allow such, and only very rarely was a memorialist punished for his outspokenness; but there was a limit, and that limit was anything which could be construed into a criticism of the Throne itself. To one who had any regard for the safety of his head, any suggestion that reform in the palace was needed was impossible. Thus the only possible road to a remedy was blocked.

But—discussed Basse and myself—was there not a conceivable way through that impasse? What about the opportunity he was about to have? He need not fear for his head, though doubtless there would be no small risk to his life in other ways. Would it not be worth it? Might it not be possible to put an appeal in such a manner that, coming from a foreigner who gave the strongest evidence of his love for the country, the Empress Dowager might read it through before destroying it in her inevitable rage; and then the matter would lie in the lap of the gods.

So I concocted for Basse the weird memorial which is given in Appendix B. Let it be said at once that it was not presented. On consulting his Chinese friends he was told that it would not be his head that would be lost but theirs. It is recorded as an example of Basse's extraordinary activities. The anti-foreign expressions in it should be considered by the light of affairs existing at the time, by the light of what might impress the Empress Dowager, and by the light of the magnitude of what was aimed at.

Nothing has been said of Basse as a German. So far as national characteristics were concerned it was hard to believe that he was one. He loathed Prussian ways, perhaps because coming from the Junker's country he was no Junker himself. His avoidance of German consulates and the German Legation at Peking was marked.

Whenever possible he exerted himself to draw me into purely Chinese official affairs. In general it was through his introduction that I got into some degree of touch with high Chinese officials, without which one side of my later life would not have developed. It is in that sense that Basse, more than any other person, influenced my doings; but later he became disappointed in me because I did not imitate him in his way of dealing with the satraps. He thought I could have done so had I wished, but that was not the case. Basse was a genius at it, and my one attempt to copy him ended in the ignominious failure of my Naval Secretaryship—as will be told later. And so our co-operation ended, and I lost touch with his affairs; though when we met we continued to be the best of friends.

He died of typhus fever at Peking; he died before Yuan Shih-kai, and so did not see the destruction of all he had taken part in; and he did not see Germany bringing disaster on the world. It was the crowning mercy to his strange career.

IX

THE YELLOW RIVER

China's Sorrow—the Yellow river—broke its banks once more, and from the breach there poured into the plain not merely the waters of the river but, as I estimated later, a thousand million cubic yards of silt, which, spreading itself over an area of two hundred square miles with a depth averaging five feet or so, engulfed dozens of villages and rendered great tracts sterile; but on the fringe of the area affected it left a fine deposit of unsurpassed fertility.

The river in the plain flowed through three provinces—Honan, Chihli and Shantung—and the Viceroy of the second and the Governor of the third were Basse's friends, Yuan Shih-kai and old Chou-fu. There was nothing extraordinary in this flooding—it happened every now and then—but Basse's friends asked what he thought about it. He replied that several foreign engineers had in the past reported on the river, and it seemed to him they had failed to realize that a river with such extraordinary features might need extraordinary treatment rather than an orthodox one based on practice with normal rivers elsewhere; that anyhow the problem was as much an administrative one as it was technical; and he recommended that I should be invited to report upon the matter. Thus Basse, trying to push me on and give me opportunities; he had consulted me about the river some time before, and I had posted him upon the subject without knowing what he had in view.

So the two satraps asked Sir Robert Hart to lend me for this work, and in February 1903 Basse, Corsten—a Danish military engineer employed in some capacity by Yuan—and I started from Tientsin for Chinanfu. Before I left, Yuan Shih-kai had told me how until quite recently there had been a Viceroy of the Yellow river charged solely with its maintenance; but since the Boxer time the post had been discontinued, and now the three provinces managed their sections independently and with no arrangement for co-ordination. He and Chou-fu were anxious to co-operate, but the Governor of Honan at Kaifengfu was a doubtful factor; it would be for me to try and bring him into line with some general scheme.

Of course I was as keen as mustard about this splendid amateur adventure; but let me say at once that in this affair—as in most of the big affairs that from time to time I have put my hand to—I fell short of full success, for at Chinanfu I learnt from old Chou-fu that it would be useless to go to Kaifengfu as it had been ascertained that the Governor there was antagonistic to any change—doubtless he feared curtailment of his peculations from the river funds. But on the other hand I did not fail entirely; my printed report [1] remains, I think, the most informative on the condition of the Yellow river, and it led later to other activities in river work.

There was no railway at that time between Tientsin and Chinanfu. We rode the two hundred miles or so; two ponies each, and we did our thirty miles or so a day. The carts—with beds, baggage, cooking gear, stores and servants—limited the daily distance. A cart or two was loaded up with strings of cash—perhaps half a ton—to pay our expenses on the way; some forty cash were a pennyworth, and there was no other currency generally acceptable. At each township our mounted guards—provided to protect us from the brigands with which the country was infested—were changed—weird medieval-looking figures who, as likely as not, had themselves been brigands in their time and would be so again.

We put up for the night at inns—a courtyard surrounded by unfurnished mud-floored rooms with charcoal scribbled walls—where the legs of our camp-beds were placed in bowls of water to prevent the bugs from crawling up. The story goes that it is well to mount an umbrella as a covering, for the beasts, foiled in their attempt upon the legs, climb up the walls, walk across the ceiling and then let go and drop upon the bed.

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[1] Extract from a letter of mine to the Inspector-General:—‘When I was at home I showed that report to Sir Charles Hartley and to Mr. Vernon Harcourt—the two most eminent river engineers in England. On the strength of it they got me made an Associate of the Institution of Civil Engineers; very few are now made, and those who were elected at the same time as myself were Lord Armstrong, Admiral Wharton, the Hydrographer, and the Hon. T. Brassey.’

I must restrain the tendency to extraneous episodes; otherwise I should like to tell the story of how, before that journey's end, I contracted an internal abscess, and because of the excruciating pain was given morphia, and later gave myself some and broke the needle in my arm and spilled the tabloids in the bed; then—quite irresponsible for what I did—spent the night in searching for and eating them, with the most interesting results in the way of visions; how I was carried in a litter to an American missionary hospital at Chinanfu and was operated on by Dr. Neal; how, when convalescent, I joined the circle of his charming family and there met missionaries of various sects, who freely discussed religious matters with me—I told them of my father, of his sense of dignity in religion, so opposed to their own curious familiarity—and how, as a result, I was persuaded to hold a service to show them how I thought it should be done.

A short time before, the Governor of Tsingtau—the port that Germany had grabbed—had paid Chou-fu a visit, and there were banquets at which the German made long-sentenced speeches, with moustaches bristling with the earnestness of his importance as the Kaiser's representative; and quite plainly, he made the Chinese very tired. In those days, speeches were not a custom at a feast, and the reply from Chou-fu would be of the very briefest. Then, as a consequence of the German visit, and while I was there, came Stewart-Lockhart, now Sir James, the British Commissioner at Weihaiwei—an exemplar of a very different method. His knowledge of the language was not merely that of a sinologue; he knew the vernacular—the argot of the gentry class. To Chou-fu he said he had not come to bother him with politics, but to pay his respects to a venerable Governor and to visit Confucius' shrine; and at the banquets his speeches were full of wit and humour and sometimes very bold—but he knew his power. Thus in proposing the health of the Provincial Judge, he commented on the different ways of East and West, and on how much the East could teach the West. ‘I hear that His Excellency the Judge can try a prisoner and pass judgment on him, without even having seen him or having heard a word of evidence; and that is more than we have so far attained to.’ The Judge took the laughter from this sally very well, but stored up its remembrance and waited for his chance. It came a few days later at another feast. ‘I am told by my emissaries, whose duty it is to guard him, that His Excellency the Commissioner visited this morning such-and-such a shrine and purchased there a *wa-wa*—a little clay figure of a naked boy that women buy who desire a son.’ The Judge paused and then proceeded solemnly and slowly, ‘and I sincerely trust that when His Excellency returns to Weihaiwei, he will find it efficacious.’ I rather believe that it was those light-hearted speeches of Stewart-Lockhart and the response they drew that started the practice with the Chinese.

There was a sequel to that story. A year or so later Stewart-Lockhart visited Chinan again and once more proposed the Judge's health. Speaking of the commercial honesty for which the Chinese were so famous, he said, ‘Yet there are lapses now and then, and one—from which I personally suffered grievous disappointment—I wish to bring officially to the notice of the Judge. He will remember that, when last I paid a visit to our venerable host, I bought a *wa-wa* at a temple. It purported to be the genuine article, but it was not: I got another daughter.’

I inspected the hundred miles of river from Chinan to the sea; had long talks with the river officials on ways and means and methods, and from them learnt more about the history of the river than had ever been recorded. The Chinese had only one idea: to keep the river within its elevated bed, and when it left it, to get it back. For that purpose their methods surpassed anything the foreign engineer could teach them. The foreign engineers who had reported on the river had also only one idea: to so improve the river's regimen as to cause it to carry its load of silt down to the sea. But that aim is quite impossible; the river's function is to raise the plain, and it will fulfil that function, however Man may try to stop it. The one and only remedy is to have artificial floods to provide for silt deposit, instead of accidental ones, and so march with instead of contrary to nature. And that was the text of my report.

For thousands of years the river has been China's sorrow Each year a half million sterling is spent upon its maintenance; each year on the average—a disaster comes at intervals of years—it causes a quarter million sterling's worth of damage; each decade or so, on the Great Plain of China, a million lives or more are lost from floods or drought, owing to the condition on the rivers. That plain has an area of about a hundred thousand square miles, and its forty million inhabitants live in a constant state of ever-impending disaster. They have done so for thousands of years. Nowhere else in all the world is there such a period-area of calamity.

There is nothing inevitable about this condition. It is man-made, not nature-made. The evil done can be undone. Not only so: the features of the rivers that now make for evil admit of being turned to benefit. Their waters could be used for irrigation; their silt for fertilization; and that Great Plain could be converted from an area of ever-impending tragedy to one of security and unsurpassed prosperity; and it would be a vastly profitable business undertaking.

Although those millions live under the shadow of disaster, it must not be thought that their normal lives are miserable. They are no more miserable than the peasants living on the slopes of Etna. But in a famine area—say from floods—there is a tragic suffering that sears one's heart to witness. The people are crowded on the dykes, which are edged with mat-shed hovels; their crops are gone, they have no seed for others; boiled willow leaves is all they have to eat; the naked children have distended stomachs and their legs are no longer bifurcated—there is a wide gap where the femur bones join the pelvis. The tragedy is borne in patient silence like that of an animal in sickness; but there are whispers of hunger-mad men and women having secret gruesome meals.

There is nothing like the Yellow river elsewhere in the world. It is not only that it runs above the level of the plain ; to a lesser extent the Mississippi also has that feature ; it is among the five longest rivers, but its volume is not large ; it is useless for navigation—it is just a drain. Yet it is unique, for there is no other river which combines its vigorous youthfulness, the load it carries, the vastness of its virtual delta, the size of its unaccomplished task in building up the plain, and the contempt it shows, when every now and then it spews out a quarter of a cubic mile of silt, for Man's efforts to prevent it from exercising a natural function.[1]

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[1] An extract from a letter written in 1906 to Mr. Oudendijk, the Dutch Minister, in which in reply to some inquiry I briefly express myself on the problem of the Yellow river, seems worth recording and is given in Appendix C.

X

THE CHINESE ADMIRALTY

1. THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

OWING to the situation at the end of the Boxer affair the clouds of war began again to gather. It was a time of monstrous complication between the chancelleries of Europe. Great Britain had the Boer War on hand; Russia, Germany and France were considering how our preoccupation could be turned to their benefit and to each other's detriment; our 'splendid isolation' principle could no longer work, so for some years past there had been tentative approaches to an alliance between us and Germany, which a mixture on the one hand of procrastination and lack of unity of purpose and on the other the ambition to challenge British sea supremacy rendered futile; and so there grew the idea of a settlement of our differences with France and of a rapprochement with that country—which developed later.

That was roughly the state of affairs when, after the Boxers had been put down, the Russians showed that where they were they meant to stay—not only in Manchuria but in the north of China proper. Out of this situation, and solving it, came, in 1902, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which provided that if either country was involved in war the other would come to its assistance in the event of a third state intervening.

It is worth reviewing briefly what the policy of Russia was. Up to 1860 her boundary was the Amur river and so her naval port was Nikolaievsk—ice-bound for a large part of the year; but then China, crushed by a war with France and England, was forced by Russia to cede her seaboard from Nikolaievsk to the Korean frontier, and so was created the naval port of Vladivostok—a great improvement on the northern port.

But if one looks at the map it is plain how the Japanese contain it ; there is no egress to the ocean which is not dominated by that country. It could not satisfy the Russians ; and to the southward lay Korea, studded with natural harbours, and weak in her subjection to the double suzerainty of China and Japan. So, as a first step—it was long before she had a chance to attempt another—Russia tried to occupy Tsushima, a Japanese island commanding the southern channel to the ocean ; but Great Britain shooed her off.

Then came the war of 1894 between China and Japan, when the former ceded to the latter the Manchurian littoral from Korea to the Liaotung Peninsula, including Port Arthur, the Chinese naval port. The Russians did not like it. If acquiesced in this cession would permanently block their game ; so they persuaded France and Germany—they nominally failed with England—to join her in bringing pressure to make Japan give up her spoil of war ; and against such pressure Japan was helpless. She retired and—wise little country that she was—proceeded at once to make her preparations for the future. China, of course, was grateful and so yielded to Russia's claim to be allowed to build a railway across Manchuria from Vladivostok to cut off the great arc that was caused by the loop of the frontier formed by the Amur river ; and where that railway crossed the Sungari river was built the great Russian city of Harbin.

Three years later, Germany started the policy of grab by seizing Tsingtau because two German missionaries had been murdered. Thereupon Russia demanded and obtained the lease of Liaotung Peninsula—which so short a time before she had made the Japanese relinquish—and the right to join it to Harbin by rail. England followed with the lease of Weihaiwei, as an offset to the Russian menace ; France followed with the lease of Kwangchow-wan, and Italy, without a shadow of excuse, tried but failed to secure a lease of Sanmen Bay, in Chekiang Province.[1] These facts, already told, require to be repeated here. Partly as a consequence of these indignities there came, as has already been explained, the Boxer uprising of 1900, and with it another chance for Russia to further her desires. Realizing eventually that China was not to be partitioned, she limited her immediate ambitions to Manchuria; but her threat extended to Korea. The representations from other Powers on her acts resulted in an exhibition of tortuousness and mendacity that is possibly unique in the annals of diplomacy. It was during the hatching of this situation that Lord Salisbury referred to Count Ignatieff as the biggest liar he had come across in his political experience.[1]

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[1] I advised the Chinese Admiral at this time that in case of the Italians using force he should, regardless of all consequences, throw his little fleet against them.

Russia threatened Korea, and, if she occupied that country, she would dominate Japan and the Far East in general. That she intended to do it was so evident that in February 1904 little Japan struck at her giant neighbour.[2]

In the development of this situation I took a keener interest and formed more definite opinions than in any of the problems with which the Far East became involved. For this there were several reasons. Although it was Chinese territory that was in dispute, China was hardly a party to the quarrel. It was the sick Chow Dog's bone that was being fought for by the Wolfhound and the Terrier. So with the elimination of that nightmare of intangibility, which China as an active factor always means, the points at issue seemed—though they were not really—comparatively simple. Then I was strongly antagonistic to the Japanese. That was only natural by reason of their victory over China ; but of course I had admiration too and appreciation of the high chivalry which they had shown at Weihaiwei.

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[1] *Ten Years at the Court of St. James*, by Baron von Eckardstein.

[2] An illuminating exposition of Russia's actions in this matter is given in Count Witte's *Reminiscences of the Reign of Nicolas II.*, of which the following is a translated summary :—

'When the Germans seized Tsingtau, Russian war vessels with troops were sent to Port Arthur, and the Russian Government demanded a lease of the Kwantung Peninsula: a demand which was at first indignantly refused by the Empress Dowager. Count Witte, while disapproving of the act, knew that the Tsar—egged on by the Kaiser for his own purposes—was determined to have Port Arthur, even if the use of force was necessary to that end; so he cabled a private message to Li Hung-chang pointing out the inevitability of the occupation and promising him half a million roubles for his support. That support was duly given and with success, and the bribe was duly paid. "Thus," says Count Witte, "was taken that ill-omened step which led to future developments culminating in the tragic Japanese war and our internal troubles."'

In view of the fact that only a few years previously Russia had been a party to forcing Japan to relinquish her war-won occupancy of the Kwantung Peninsula, Count Witte stigmatizes the Russian seizure as an act of unprecedented duplicity.

The unexpected seriousness of the attitude of Great Britain and Japan about the seizure alarmed Muravieff, the Foreign Minister, for he had assured the Tsar that it would cause no trouble. It was thus that, in fear of a conflict with Japan, he abandoned the position of great influence which Russia had gained in Korea; he withdrew his Adviser to the Korean Emperor, his military instructors, and his other agents; and he signed an agreement definitely admitting Japan's predominating influence in the country.

It was early breach of that agreement that brought about the war between Japan and Russia.

Of the justness of their quarrel there could be no question ; they were—though the immediate factor was the Chow Dog's bone—fighting for existence. But I would not have them on the continent—especially in China—at any price. Of the two, as grabbers of Chinese territory, Russia would be the lesser evil. I held this view most strongly and had maintained it with some measure of success in my argument with Chirol. I had sympathy with Russia in her railway scheme. Look at the map and see the great temptation—when the break-up of China was a seeming probability—to possess the country through which that railway ran. So I considered that, if war—with all the evils that would inevitably result, whoever won it—could be averted by acquiescing in a Russian annexation of Manchuria to the northward of her railway, it should be agreed to.

In July 1903 I went home on nine months' leave, accompanied by a sister who had been paying me a visit ; we travelled by the Siberian railway, and I saw something of Russian preparations—the sidings were crammed with vanloads of men and horses and field-guns. My sister became indisposed and at St. Petersburg laid up, so I went to the Embassy for advice about a doctor. There I met Spring-Rice, who in the absence of the Ambassador was Chargé d'Affaires. I did not volunteer my views, but he questioned me and showed great interest in them. It happened that owing to the renovation of his quarters he and the Military Attaché had their meals at the hotel where we were staying, and I was asked to join them. At Spring-

Rice's request I wrote a memorandum on the situation, as I saw it, for transmission to the Foreign Office. He warned me that my association with them would make me subject to suspicion by the Secret Service and that therefore I should on no account keep a copy of my paper and that I should be careful to burn my blotter. But I was vastly pleased with what seemed to me the importance that had so unexpectedly fallen on me. A memorandum to the Foreign Office ! I must keep a copy, and I did so, placing it in my despatch-box, that in my portmanteau, and both locked of course. Spring-Rice was right ; for just before we left St. Petersburg I discovered that the paper had been stolen. It was well for me that the opinions I expressed were so favourable to Russia ; otherwise I should have been arrested as a spy.

There remains a curious sequel to that episode. My companion in the coupé on that journey to the frontier was Garfield —a Russian of English origin. Some years before I had known him quite well in China ; he was then connected with a Russian Government mission in Korea ; and now this seemingly accidental meeting. For was it accidental on his part ? I cannot give the reasons for the suspicion that grew on me ; they were vague but based on several facts, and in the aggregate convinced me that Garfield had been sent to find out what he could about me and my business.

Spring-Rice had arranged for me to see the Foreign Office ; I had some interesting conversations there and learnt that Lord Lansdowne had read my memorandum ; and then of course they dropped me. I had one other shot at propaganda about another matter—the saving of China from partition. Fearon, a leading American merchant of Shanghai, was in London ; I gave him a memorandum which he delivered as a speech before the Chamber of Commerce at New York ; and later I had the satisfaction of hearing Sir Robert Hart express pleasurable surprise at the soundness of a merchant's views.

In December I realized that there was no longer any hope that war would be averted, and, as I wished to have a hand in neutrality affairs, I sacrificed two months of leave, and in

January left for China via Suez. I had added to my stock of books on naval warfare and International Law, and on that journey read them up and thought about how exterritoriality would affect China's functions in neutrality. But war broke out two weeks or so before I reached Shanghai ; China had made her declaration of neutrality, and Hobson, the Customs Commissioner, was advising the local Chinese officials about dealing with the Russian gunboat *Manjur*, which had taken refuge there. Hobson, a very senior man, had been one of Gordon's officers in the Taiping days, and might have known something about the practices of war ; but the advice he gave was radically wrong. Neutrality duties are those of an international policeman—they are essentially executive ; yet, instead of acting on that principle and interning the vessel out-of-hand, he made the matter a subject of discussion between the Taotai and the two belligerent consuls and consequently at Peking between the Government and the two Ministers concerned ; and so the duty, which in any case would be difficult for China, was made much more so by this wrong beginning.

I could not intervene ; the thing had gone too far, and besides I received instructions from Peking to attend to the barrier removal at Canton called for by the Mackay Treaty. That affair and others resulting from my sojourn in the South employed me for over a year. I returned in May 1905, and most opportunely from the standpoint of my neutrality ambition, for a week later the transports of Admiral Rojestvensky's fleet arrived at Woosung, and a few days later that fleet was defeated and annihilated off Tsushima—the island which in 1860 the Russians had tried to occupy.

In the previous August the Russian war vessels *Askold* and *Grozovoi*, having broken out of Port Arthur, which was invested by the Japanese, took refuge at Shanghai. Again there was that exhibition of wrong-dealing with them, so now, with the remnants of the Russian fleet seeking protection at Shanghai and Chefoo, the time was ripe for me to take a hand. I discussed the matter with the Chinese Admiral and with Hobson, and then I went to see the Viceroy at Nanking—the same

Chou-fu whom I had known at Chinanfu—and it was arranged that he would instruct the Admiral to follow my advice. So I took hold of the affair. Dr. Morse, in his *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, says: ‘The Chinese authorities learnt their lesson from this experience (their dealing with the *Manjur* and other early cases for internment) and on the arrival of Admiral Rojestvensky's fleet in Eastern waters, the Coast Inspector, W. F. Tyler, . . . was appointed as neutrality adviser to the naval Commander-in-Chief. Towards the end of May 1905, Russian transports functioning with the Russian fleet . . . arrived at Woosung. They were promptly declared war-vessels by Admiral Yeh, the Commander-in-Chief; and were given the choice of proceeding or of being interned. Admiral Yeh refused to discuss the matter with the Consuls or allow the local Chinese civil officers to interfere. Recalcitrant Russians, who after internment refused to give parole, were placed under arrest; and the important principle was enunciated and given effect to that in the performance of neutrality duties China was in no way limited by the extraterritorial rights of the belligerents.’

There was something very fascinating in the exercise of the authority and judgment which this work entailed.[1] It was an uncommon sort of duty; it needed a knowledge of precedents —I had them at my finger-tips—but above all it needed a policeman's faculty of executiveness and not a lawyer's faculty of arguing ; and I never had a moment's doubt about it all. I find this entry in my very meagre diary : 'Saw I.G. ; he was very nice and complimentary.'

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[1] I find the following letter from the late Admiral Sir Gerard Noel, who was Commander-in-Chief on the China station at the time. It expresses an opinion on internment which is interesting:—‘Nov. 20th, '05. Herewith the papers you kindly let me see. I think that the action you took in the case of the Russian ships, and your advice on the subject, was exceedingly sound and good; and that you managed a difficult business with considerable skill and adroitness, combining moderation with a good show of firmness. I see nothing to object to in the treatment you recommended respecting interned ships. . . . As regards the internment of warships in general, that is quite another question, and one which I sincerely trust will never become a law amongst nations, unless it is qualified by the obligation on the part of the Neutral to destroy such vessels. I consider that the act of a belligerent seeking shelter from the enemy in a neutral port to be contrary to the spirit of honourable warfare, and indeed cowardly and reprehensible, and should certainly be given no encouragement. It is the business of a warship—as part of the territory of the country to which she belongs—and therefore not rightly subject to the protection of internment—to go out and fight or surrender to her enemy.’

In this chapter I attempt to give a silhouette of history to serve as a setting to my story, and there are other chapters where I do the same ; but all the time I am conscious of the impossibility of history to really tell the truth. One picks out certain features which seem salient because one knows about them ; but in reality they are no more than mnemonic labels of one's meagre knowledge. What seems salient has no great relation to the mass of complicated factors that really rule a situation.

2. THE NAVAL SECRETARIAT

The year 1905 was a very busy one for me. By the end of May I had finished with the Canton business—the barrier removal and the bunding work—and I had started Zone Time going. Then on my return to Shanghai I caught hold of neutrality work, which lasted until October. In August I began to be involved in naval reorganization affairs, which lasted for a year and more and developed into the one fiasco of my experience. In August, too, I was requisitioned by the Nanking Viceroy to report on Haichow as a possible terminus for an East and West Railway ; and I will tell the little that I have to say about it first.

Haichow city is approached by a little river—or rather a swash-way—through a highwater-covered flat. At low tide the waterway is nearly dry, but at the beginning of the flood tide a bore runs up, and on the crest of that bore a craft drawing twelve feet can rush up at many miles an hour. After my first preliminary inspection from a Chinese man-of-war I sent one of the Customs cruisers to survey the place. The Captain took her in the river and at low water let her sit upon the mud. That was all right ; but when the bore came up it hit her like a waterfall, and she and her two heavy anchors swept up the river like a cockle-shell. Then the Captain put her up a side creek, and there at low tide she settled in the mud, and when the bore came up she did not rise ; and we very nearly lost that vessel. In the end she was dug out by a regiment of soldiers.

On the visit that I made I had unexpectedly to stay a night on shore, and was accommodated in the guest-room of a temple, outside the city with a great plain in front of it. Of course the room was infested, but to avoid hurting the feelings of my hosts I stood it until the watchman was asleep, and then I crept out quietly, unbarred the gates, went out on the plain —it was summer time, fine and warm with a full moon—and lay down on the ground with a building-stone as pillow ; and soon, in the great comfort of freedom from attack—as I thought—I was fast asleep.

I was wakened by a fetid smell—a smell that pushed against me, as it were, with horrid warmth and dampness—and then I saw the cause of it. Quite close to my face—within an inch or two—was the snout and curled-back lips and glistening fangs of a huge and ragged chow dog. It was a wild scavenger that ate anything that came its way, including corpses, and even when it saw I was not one it seemed to think I soon might be, for it was as much as I could do to shoo it off. In those few moments—they probably were seconds—I was as scared as ever I have been.

The Haichow scheme came to nothing ; there was not enough water off the coast to justify an artificial harbour.

And now about the Navy. In July Admiral Yeh died. In my confidential report on officers after the battle of Yalu I said : ‘ Captain Yeh is a most gentlemanly officer and is universally liked, but he is perfectly useless for fighting purposes. I do not say that he is a coward, but he had no heart in his work.’ At Weihaiwei also he did not shine. Yet as an Admiral I liked him. He was well disposed and comparatively uncomplicated ; his mentality approximated to that of an Englishman—as does that of so many educated Chinese. Had I been associated with him in naval reorganization we should have got something useful done. We should have provided a nucleus of efficient administration and might have left a mark. But Yeh died, and Sah—now Sir Sah Ping-chen, K.C.M.G.—succeeded him.

Sah was not in the Yalu battle, but at Weihaiwei the affair of asking for instructions before he left his post marked him as exceptional in character. In that confidential report I bracketed him with one other as my choice for future advancement. That other became Minister of the Navy, turned traitor to Yuan Shih-kai, and was murdered at Canton. Sah also was Minister of the Navy and for a short time was Premier ; and, when he held the latter post and I was Adviser to two Ministries, he appointed me in most complimentary terms as Honorary Adviser to the Cabinet on Sino-foreign relations. That is looking far ahead, but it has a bearing on what I have in hand : the character of Sah and the nature of my relations with him.

To state that one of us is honest in money matters is an insult : it implies the possibility of the other thing ; but with a Chinese it is different. Some degree of squeeze of money passing through their hands is both customary and part of their system. Their self-respect is usually involved with doing it to a greater or a lesser extent ; and in the public view virtue lies not in abstinence but in reasonable moderation. For a Chinese—especially one in a high position with no fear of interference—to adopt our Western code of honour in this respect ; to realize the evil that squeezing constitutes, and to make himself an unadvertised exponent of a rigid probity in money matters, would be a notable achievement. Sah did it. There are, doubtless, other cases ; I know of one other I could vouch for.

So Sah was endowed with the rare qualities—for a Chinese—of physical bravery and financial integrity ; and with the prominence he gained and the positions he occupied, what might he not have done for China if he had only had a reasonably normal judgment and the language to express it ! But he had not. His judgments were vagaries and he was curiously inarticulate. He was full of good intentions, principles and ideals, and he would willingly have let himself be martyred for his country ; but one could not get at his ideas ; they were as intangible as nightmares ; his plane of thought was entirely oblique not only to the Westerner but also to his fellow countrymen. In spite of his virtues he was tortuous and unreliable in his ways ; he started as my trusted friend ; he became my bitter enemy and got me in the very devil of a mess, from which it took me many months to extricate myself ; and later he became my friend—my very generous friend—again.

Of course, I would not say all this about him—I should have confined myself to what was only complimentary—had there not been a need. That need is the explanation of the fiasco of my naval reorganization work. I will tell the story of it now.

Sah had every reason to be well disposed to me. There was my service in the war of '94. Then, when the Chinese fleet—of which Sah was Commodore—was driven out of Shanghai harbour in the Boxer time, Admiral Seymour at my instance sent Captain Cumming in the *Hermione* to visit Sah at Nanking—a visit of appreciation in connection with the conduct of the Chinese navy at the time ; it was an exceptional and a gracious act on the part of Admiral Seymour. Then later, while Admiral Yeh was alive, Sah was associated with me in neutrality work. Then Yeh died, on the 30th July, as my diary shows ; and there are these further entries :—

3rd August. Sah discusses naval reorganization.

12th August. Inspected Nanyang Squadron with Sah.

13th August. Drawing up naval reorganization scheme[1] with Basse at Sah's request.

These entries merely mean that Sah on getting command of the navy sought my advice. I had no idea of and no ambition for any new adventure ; but Basse and Sah and the Viceroys—that was probably the order of initiative—got busy without my knowing it, and one day it was sprung upon me that they wished me to be associated with Sah in a reorganizing scheme, and that I should join in the conference of how it could be brought about.

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[1] That scheme was later the subject of an Imperial Rescript in which Basse and I were named as the proposers of it. The Rescript approved the scheme, but it was never given effect to.

The idea—within limits—appealed to me. I had no intention of giving up my Marine Department post, but I was willing to devote a year to being—as I put it—a sort of naval St. John the Baptist in preparing the way for a better man. No one could know as well as I did what the Chinese fleet needed and how it should be given to them—no British naval officer could possibly know. In the final scheme—when I had finished—there should be the least possible number of English officers—a Naval Adviser, a Gunnery Lieutenant and a Torpedo Lieutenant would suffice. There should be none of the wet-nursing that Lang had used and had to use ; for his problem was to get the fleet as efficient as he could in the shortest possible time in view of the growing menace of Japan. My scheme was to inculcate self-reliance and professional self-respect, however slow the process ; a few officers would yearly be sent to England for short-course training, and on their return would be used as staff college instructors, and the pick of them would later be sent again ; and so on, making them do the work themselves, however slowly, instead of doing it for them. It would be a most interesting affair to start this scheme a-rolling and then turn it over to a British naval officer. But to do it in a year—to do it at all so far as that went—I should need an exceptional position.

I had all the lessons of the past to warn me—Lay, Forbes and Lang. Executiveness was of course taboo—Sah's normal authority as Commander-in-Chief must not be touched, but in those matters that would usually be the functions of an Admiralty I considered that Sah and I should share the power jointly under the three Viceroys who administered the navy. This was agreed upon between the three of us—Sah, Basse and myself—and Basse got the Viceroy's imprimatur on the scheme. I was to be Yingwuchu or Naval Secretary, and I concurred in the application to Sir Robert Hart for the loan of my services.

Then suddenly all these high hopes of good work to be done were extinguished. My appointment came. It did not make me Secretary of the Navy ; it did not even leave me as Adviser, which would have been a possible position ; it made me

Secretary to Sah and subordinate to him ; and the thing was as formal as it could be—in the name of the three Viceroys, and I am not sure that it had not been sanctioned by the Throne. So there was a predicament !

From Sah I could get no explanation. He just sulked and was sarcastically rude—a complete *volte-face* in his attitude and manner. And Basse said the only thing to do was to see the Nanking Viceroy—and that it was for me to do it and not for him. So I went and was told that the Viceroy was not seeing any one—he was sick. My diary says he really was ; but it may well be doubted. Then Basse said that it was urgent that I should go up North at once and explain things to Yuan Shih-kai. With the extraordinary ease with which he dealt with the Viceroys he assumed that I could do the same. There was little doubt that Yuan knew that I had come to see him, but camouflage was used ; I was told by my friends in his entourage that it would be most impolitic to see him on the matter ; the affair had gone too far to admit of any formal alteration or admission of an error ; but what was possible would be done. Then I saw Sir Robert Hart and told him what had happened. My diary says that he was kindly severe in his blame for having got myself into such a mess by aiming at too much power ; why had I not done so and so, and I replied that in a game of cards one played according to one's judgment, and with the added element of luck one won or lost. He acquiesced and said that I must continue to play my game myself—to get out of the mess as best I could—he could not help me ; and then he added with a spice of humorous malice, 'You have found at last your limitations' ; and that was the greatest compliment I ever had.

In the end a compromise was reached : the appointment was to stand but I would be called the Yingwuchu, I should have the right to petition directly the Viceroys, and—a curious touch, but very Chinese—I was to be accorded the honours of an Admiral. The puzzling thing about it all was not only that I had not been consulted before the change was made, but that no explanation of it was forthcoming. But I got a sidelight on the puzzle from an officer on the Nanking Viceroy's staff.

The Viceroy, he said, had discovered to his astonishment that I ranked in the Customs with a Deputy Commissioner, and in those circumstances to give me such a high position as Yingwuchu was impossible. So that injustice to my predecessor —continued to myself—came home to roost, for Sir Robert Hart was much annoyed at what had happened. I have little doubt that that was the reason, and that the rest of it—the failure to consult me or to explain—was due to the kink in Sah's mentality ; then, being what he was, the sense of having injured me became converted into enmity.

But with all the muddle that had happened and the loss of face that resulted from the failure of my attempted visits to the Viceroys, I still could have got usefully to work if Sah would have co-operated. But he would not. He opposed me systematically and started on his own with futile little schemes which had no relation to reorganizing. The only thing I was allowed to do was to compile Naval Regulations with a committee of Captains. That was quite an interesting undertaking ; I found the American regulations of the greatest help, especially in disciplinary matters—about Courts of Inquiry, Courts Martial, procedure and rules of evidence—there was less left to the customs of the service than in the British regulations.

There is just one incident to tell about that work. Among the list of offences named in naval codes is that of an unnatural act—the abominable crime, as it is called in English law—and I wondered how the committee would take my proposal that it should be added to the Chinese list, for as in all Eastern countries, it had a certain prevalence. The initiative in proposing penalties lay with me, and, until public opinion on this matter had developed, I thought a year's imprisonment would meet the case. But to my astonishment one Captain saw a point. So lenient a punishment, he said, would cast a slur upon the navy's reputation; he recommended something drastic—I think it was fifteen years' penal servitude on the Western confines of the Empire, and as the others were shy of expressing any view upon the matter, that heavy penalty was incorporated into Chinese naval law.

An affair occurred which might well have landed me in still greater difficulties. A young Lieutenant in the *Ting Yuen* had behaved uncommonly well in the war of '94; and later he was appointed as my private secretary. But now, at the Admiralty, he and another perpetrated a fraud of outrageous boldness about the sale of the wreck of a Chinese cruiser, and for that purpose the other used the Admiral's seal. Here, however, I had a stroke of luck; the other was the Admiral's Flag-Lieutenant.

The year's service to which I had committed myself would end on the 1st February; but in November, in view of the hopelessness of my relations with Sah and the completion of all I was allowed to do in Naval Regulations, I suggested to the Viceroy that I should be allowed to go on leave. This proposal was the easier to make inasmuch as I drew no naval pay; I was lent by the Customs. Now the Viceroy at Nanking was then Tuan Fang—a Manchu and a great gentleman. He understood the cruelty of the position in which through no fault of my own I had been placed; and to relieve it and to give me face he arranged that I should go on a mission to the British Admiralty on behalf of the Naval Viceroys, to ask for facilities for the training of Chinese officers. But misfortune had not ceased to dog my footsteps in this naval business. In spite of the strict correctness of the credentials I possessed—they were from Admiralty to Admiralty as it were, and not a diplomatic act—the First Sea Lord would not see me. I was treated coldly as if I were a mere adventurer. So here was another and a worse humiliation to be swallowed; and it seems likely that this, too, was somehow engineered from China. When I returned I disguised the matter as far as possible in my report to Tuan; but how much he knew I cannot say. He was, however, charming and complimentary to me and gave me a pair of fine cloisonné vases as a wedding present. Poor Tuan Fang was later murdered in a very brutal way when Viceroy of Szechuen.

I have said before how I regret the fact that so much of this book deals with minor exploits by myself, so it has seemed well to give somewhat fully this story of my great and dismal failure.

XI

A LULL IN WORK

1. THE FEATHER STORY

When I went home on that abortive mission I travelled again across Siberia, and again I had adventures. The Harbin-Irkutsk train got snowed up and delayed and we missed our connection, as in those days the trains ran only once a week. So we had five days to stay at Irkutsk. I had forgathered with a Russian Colonel and an English mining engineer, both good companions, and the latter a great wag. The hotel being full, the Engineer and I were accommodated in a spare reception room. The night was also full of happenings and noise; guests left the dinner tables or were carried from them at eight in the morning; there were public entertainments that began at 2 a.m., and after them the dining-room again. The Russians were incredible eaters and drinkers, and voracious for excitement; and all the time their country toppled on the brink.

And there, in that hotel, occurred the feather story. The three of us were sitting drinking beer in that converted room, when the door opened and there entered a middle-aged man and a youth, the latter the nephew, as we later heard. Apologies for the intrusion showed that they were English, so I invited them to join us, which they did. It seemed to me that it was for the uncle, who was much senior to us, to make the opening remark. So I waited for it, and waited till the silence was embarrassing, and then at last he made it in this astounding form: ‘Do you know anything about feathers?’

Now when one is caught in an emergency the best that can happen is for one’s subconscious mind to take control and guide. It did so in this case, and I answered promptly : ‘ No, that is not one of my subjects. It is surely an uncommon one ; but as it happens, my friend here,’ and I indicated the Miner, ‘ is an enthusiastic feather expert.’—‘ Now that is a stroke of luck,’ said the uncle, turning to the Miner. ‘ I am making a study of feathers and cognate matters in the Far East and hope soon to visit Manchuria. If I could get some data about it before I go there it would be of the greatest use to me. I trust you will not mind if I take notes of the information you provide me with ? ’ The Miner merely nodded in assent ; he was pulling himself together, as it were, for the part that I had put upon him ; and then the inquiry began.

‘ The subject of eggs is so intimately connected with that of feathers that you are, of course, equally conversant with it. Can you tell me anything about the relation between the major and the minor axis of the eggs of the Chinese hen ? ’ My faith in the Miner was justified, for his answer came at once. ‘ Why yes, I should think I can. It is a detail to which I have given special attention. My investigations show that the average proportion is one-point-six-nine-eight-four. If I had my notebook I could give it to you to ten places of decimals. It will interest you to hear that the average variation from the average is point-one-five-three, while the maximum variation, owing to deformities, has no significance.’

As he listened to this information I caught a gleam of the keenest satisfaction and appreciation in the uncle’s eye, and I wondered what it meant. I once knew a man, quite sane on every other subject, who collected road flints by the thousand in the insane belief that they were valuable palaeoliths. Was there something similar about this man ?

‘ My dear sir, I am in the greatest luck to have met you. Excuse me, I must record every word you said. Now can you tell me something about the rachis and of the hypnorachis of the feathers of the Langshan cock ? ’

I did not hear the answer to this question, for, fearing that either the Russian or I would betray the situation, I pleaded an engagement for the pair of us and said we would return in twenty minutes’ time.

Subsequently the Miner told me that, when he was given a question which was entirely unintelligible to him, as was the one about the feathers of the Langshan cock, he explained that that particular subject belonged to the colleague with whom he was working in collaboration. In the great majority of cases, however, he was able to supply imaginary information which had the greatest interest for the inquirer, if judged by the avidity with which he recorded the answers.

In due course the Colonel and I returned, and, as we sat down, the Miner said: 'Yes, it is a unique condition, existing nowhere else, as far as I am aware, in all the world. In explanation it should be remembered that Chinese civilization is counted in millenaries, not in centuries, and so the domestication of the fowl in China has existed for an incomparably longer time than elsewhere, and thus they have had time to adjust themselves to an environment so foreign to their habitat in nature, which, as of course you know, is sub-tropical. That I am sure is the explanation of how, in the extreme climatic conditions of North China, the chicken sheds its feathers in the winter and grows fur instead.'

The uncle completed his notes on this feature of his subject, and he looked as if he had gathered in a gem. He thanked the Miner in particular and the rest of us in general for a most interesting and instructive time, informed us that his east-bound train was leaving shortly, hoped we might meet again some day, and then said good-bye and left.

The Miner was obviously a genius, and one wonders in what line of life he could have put to some profitable purpose that great talent of prompt imagination. It was some days later, when we had continued our journey, that an Englishman—a resident in Siberia—boarded our train at Omsk. In due course I told him the story of the feathers. 'So you thought you pulled his leg?' And then he told us that the uncle was a great cold-storage owner and expert; he was intensely keen on his business and was always on the look-out for information concerning it; it was an idiosyncrasy of his to disguise at first the nature and the reason for his interest in the subject, and to approach it by somewhat circuitous routes. 'He is a great wag himself; and, of course, spotted at once the situation and played up to it.'[1]

That journey was curiously full of interesting incidents, but I must not give space except to just one more.

An onlooker could not have been otherwise than greatly puzzled by the little scene that was being enacted on the platform of the Moscow railway station. The express was about to leave for the German frontier. There was the usual bustle of hurrying passengers, with their porters and their baggage; but some had wisely come in ample time, had settled in their coupés and now were spending the last few moments on the platform. Among these were a middle-aged couple and a very pretty girl of twenty-one or so. They were speaking Russian and quite obviously were people of position. Where they stood was abreast of the restaurant car, in which were seated and drinking beer three hard-case looking men of middle-age—they were Englishmen on their way home from China, and one of them later proved to be a most obnoxious beast. At an adjacent window sat another man—myself—and I was later told that in my travel-worn condition I looked as hard a case as any of the others.

What was puzzling in the scene was the pretty girl's behaviour about which her companions were quietly protesting with her, and with undoubted cause; for she was giving the glad-eye in a most unequivocal manner to those four men in the restaurant car. The situation was saved—for the moment—by the signal that the train was going to start.

Now when from the restaurant car I saw that scene I sensed that the girl's behaviour must have some special explanation. It was not the girl herself—appearances are most deceptive—but her companions that made it impossible to believe that that glad-eye was of the common kind, to say nothing of the fact of our obvious unattractiveness; and I was terrified of some unseemly conduct by those three, who, being what they were, might well have formed a wrong opinion of the girl.

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[1] I am sorry that the uncle, to whose sense of humour this story is so great a tribute, declines for business reasons to let me name him.

For myself I just continued to be greatly puzzled. The next morning we reached the frontier where a change of trains took place, and in the interval we all went, as was the general custom, to a hotel. There in a writing cubicle I saw her and, deciding to solve the puzzle and give a word of warning, I took the seat that faced her. She looked up with that charmingly friendly smile of hers. I said ‘ Good morning ; do you speak English ? ’ She nodded. ‘ Then may I speak a little to you ? ’ ‘ Oh thank you, yes. I have longed that you should speak to me ; but please let me do the talking first ; I must explain myself ; I know quite well you have wondered at my conduct, but I feel sure you won’t mind when I tell you why I have shown my eagerness to know you.’ There was a moment’s pause, then she went on : ‘ Before I went to the University I had an English governess. From her I learnt to know you Englishmen —how nice you are, how kind, how chivalrous, how interesting as companions. Our Russian men, young and old, are full of politics and so terribly in earnest, or, if they are not, they are wild and bad and drink. You cannot imagine how tired and bored I am with them, and ever since I was quite small I have wanted to know an Englishman, but I have never, never had the chance. So now, going on the grand tour with my uncle and my aunt, I told them I must make the acquaintance of the very first Englishman I met. They tried to tell me I was wrong and I would get myself in trouble, but I knew that with you English no mistake was possible—my governess always told me that ; I do so hope you do not think I have been too bold. So that ’s my explanation, which I had to make in private ; but now it ’s done, let us consider the convenances, so come along and let me introduce you to my aunt, and then we ’ll have a lovely talk.’ So this most delightful young creature took me by the hand and ran across the hall towards the salon, with me trailing after her.

And then occurred the tragedy—an appalling and outrageous tragedy.

Possibly that governess had in her youth a love affair with some nice boy, who died and to whom she raised an altar, and at that altar had taught our Russian girl to worship, and so created an ideal of Englishmen. And now at one fell swoop, by the act of a drunken beast, that image of perfection was to be transmuted to an obscene and leering satyr. For, as we crossed the hall, I trailing after her, from out the buffet came those three, the evil one in front with drunken leering menace. ‘ And what the hell are you doing with my bloody girl ? ’ For a moment my little friend stood still, then hid her eyes behind her hands as if to shut out the dreadful vision of her disillusionment ; and then she fled. And I never saw her any more.

I thought, of course, of an explanation to her uncle. But what was the use ? It was not me that she was interested in but Englishmen in general ; and now her beautiful but exaggerated image of them lay broken in the mud.

It is many years ago that this sad thing happened, but the pain of it still smarts.

There is a sequel to this story. By a strange coincidence I some days later met the uncle on the Berlin-Paris train ; and then I had the chance to make my explanations and to send a message to the girl of my profound regret. He also made his explanation. His niece was an orphan and a great heiress ; he, a barrister, was her guardian, and now that she was of age and her own mistress she was a source of great anxiety to him. ‘ In her independence she is a product of these revolutionary times, and that sentimental governess of hers had filled her up with all sorts of exaggerated nonsense about you Englishmen. I told her at the station—excuse me that I say it—that I did not like the look of any of you ; but it did not make the slightest difference. I don’t regret the incident. It will be a lesson to her that she won’t so easily forget. Of course I understand how you regret it ; it is not nice to be put upon a pedestal and then knocked down.’

Then he went on to speak about his country. ‘ I have five fine sons, and we are all of the intelligentsia. A little time ago one of them was arrested and condemned to Siberia ; but it happens that the Minister concerned is a great friend of mine, so I went to see him, and he managed to get the sentence changed to banishment to Paris. Absurd ? Oh yes, in this case, of course, it was ; but in hosts of others there is nothing but appalling tragedy. My country's state is hopeless as regards reforms ; there is no conceivable evolution that can lead us to a civilized prosperity ; so revolution is the only thing ; and we can only reach our goal through seas of blood. Those five fine boys of mine ! And I am prepared to sacrifice them and, of course, myself for my country's good. Not only prepared ; I am eager that the thing should happen in my time. Fanatical ? Of course, but it is only by the fanatic that so great a thing can ever happen. Oh yes, I know quite well that the French Revolution will dwindle into insignificance compared with what must happen in my country.'

'And in this great scheme of yours what about your pretty niece and other Russian girls ? What about your wives and all the children ? '

'Ah ! there you have me, I confess. I dare not think about it ; I cannot speak of it.'

And so I had my glimpse into that seething cauldron where stewed the varied and widely discordant factors of the country —the self-seeking and intriguing of the crowd at court, the love of wild pleasure while the country toppled on the brink ; the mad crowd hypnosis of the intelligentsia, the Eastern fanaticism that the Golden Horde had left behind them. And the stock within that cauldron was an anti-matrix of mutual hate, like mercury on glass. The various cooks stirred this witches' broth—each with their own patterned spoon of ignorance—and then the foul mess exploded into the poison gas of Bolshevism.

In addition to the leave given by the Viceroys, I had six months' extension from the Customs. It may have been the disappointment of my recent failures that made me seek some other outlet for my activities. For first I published a booklet named *The Dimensional Idea as an Aid to Religion*, which attracted some attention in America and the Colonies but not in England ; and then I put forward a pamphlet which I had printed at Shanghai, *The Psycho-physical Aspect of Climate and a Theory concerning Sensation Scales*, which sounds more important than it was. But some notice was taken of it and there was talk of my being invited to lecture on the subject at Cambridge, which however came to nothing; but in connection with it I had the minor distinction of being the sole guest at a Royal Society dinner. That paper was my *magnum opus* of amateur endeavours.

When the first dreadnought was launched at Glasgow I was invited to the ceremony, and while there was offered by the builders a very handsome salary to be their agent at Peking to sell battleships to the Chinese Government; but as I disapproved strongly of China buying any ships for some years to come, that offer was of no use to me.

To add to what I crowded in those few months' leave, I married. I was forty-one and she was twenty-six, and I never formed a better judgment or had a better stroke of luck. And then my very dear mother died. She was French, her father having been General le Comte de Beseaucèle, the title descending from father to son since medieval times. My father had taken her from her gay and distinguished home in Paris and immured her in a lonely village vicarage; but as we carry within our bodies the salt water in which swam our far distant ancestors, so my mother brought with her to that village life an aura of light-hearted joyfulness, and lived all her time in it.

2. PIRACY

For thirteen years—from 1894 to 1907—I had led a life replete with incidents; but now there came a lull, and for the next three years my diaries are nearly empty—I merely did my Coast Inspector's duties. That lull was very healthy from the standpoint of my early married life—there was time to settle down. It was caused, of course, by my failure at the Admiralty; I was in the hollow of a wave of happenings and wondered if I would ever reach the crest again. That lull, too, is useful in the writing of this book, for I can now afford for a time to discard chronology and to tell of some things in general—some of those with which I came in contact.

I came a generation late for piracy in its old-time ways, when a sailing ship becalmed was in grave danger of assault by tens of pirate junks—the round shot in those days just flicked along the surface of the water in gentle-looking bounds ; when a fleet of pirate junks would fortify its harbour, and the men between excursions would grow cabbages, make love and play with their babies. The Canton Hoppo had a special set of gunboats—foreign-officered—to try to stop their depredations ; they carried a magistrate to avoid delay in executions, and because decapitation would mean a mess on the deck, the cleanliness of which was sacrosanct, they used another method. Round the neck of each prisoner—there might be twenty of them—a running noose of small chain was fitted, and the end shackled to the anchor cable ranged along the deck. Then, when all was ready, the anchor was let go ; and it should be realized that there was a hawse-pipe. Of course it made a mess, but that was forward where it did not matter. Old Stewart had been one of those pirate catchers, and later was my Captain in a Customs cruiser, and it was he—the very kindliest of men—who told me of those times.

The old opportunities have gone, but not the pirates. There is inherence of the thing in certain places ; it is in their blood ; they have been pirates for centuries ; they are impelled to the habit if they get a chance. I knew many of these pirate villages in my smuggler-catching days—round about Mirs Bay and Bias Bay, especially, in the latter, Fan-lo-kong. It looked no different from any other fishing village, yet it was well known what the men were and always had been ; and that they could muster a band of several hundred armed with Winchester repeaters to convoy smuggled opium ; there were yarns of a secret lair[1] on some outlying island where they stored their loot and kept their prisoners for ransom. And in the Canton Delta, between Canton and the West River, it is not too much to say that the majority of the creek-side population were pirates or participants or acquiescents in the calling ; and presumably they are so now.

A modern venture in the trade is for a party to take passage in a foreign steamer, at Singapore perhaps. Among the hundreds boarding and the mass of baggage there will be little difficulty in smuggling in their Mauser pistols. Then somewhere near the China coast they rise and seize the ship, doing such killing as the job necessitates. A mate, as an alternative to being shot, navigates the vessel to the pirates' rendezvous, where junks await them to transport the loot.

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[1] Such a lair has recently been found.

A venture like that must take a bit of organizing ; there must be secrecy and discipline and the attack must be well planned. Then there is the co-ordination between the band and the party at the base, arranged by cypher telegrams from Singapore, perhaps to that fishing village Fan-lo-kong.

One might think that precautions would be taken to prevent these piratical attacks on steamers ; but it is not so easy. A grill, with a double door and a sentry on it, confining the Chinese to the forepart of the ship ? It would be very useful for the purpose, but its constant efficient maintenance offers great difficulties.

A band of pirates, who had successfully attacked a British steamer in this way, was later captured, and I happened to be on the jetty of Kowloon city when the wretched prisoners were landed from a gunboat on their way to have their heads cut off. I stood and watched. The pirate chief—a man of special notoriety—trussed up for the execution and with a fan-shaped board on which his crime was written stuck down between his collar and his nape, was in the chair in which he would be later carried. He looked up at me and jabbered in his language, and what he said was translated, and amounted to something of this sort : ' I know your foreign faith. One dies but comes to life again. Perhaps ! But anyhow you foreign devils have not scored. I have one life ; well, you get it now, but I 've had six of yours, so it 's I who win.'

I had never seen an execution. A saying I had heard about experiencing certain nasty things came to my mind, ' Once, a philosopher ; twice, a beast.' So I followed the procession to the execution ground. I have already mentioned that curious phenomenon, the stretching of duration in some states of nervous tension, when sight registers a slow-motion picture.

So I saw the sword pass very slowly through the pirates' necks ; the bodies slowly topple over and the heads find their places behind between the thighs. There was a morbid reaction from that gruesome sight. For months the slim neck of a girl would make me think of executions ; and, if only for that reason, I never saw another of them.

I am not so sure that piracy is altogether bad for China. The culture of that country has discarded the cruder virtues of physical endurance and fortitude and daring ; and the only place where these are preserved is among these pirates and the brigands of the North. Of course, there is no comparison, but it was piracy of sorts in the days of Queen Elizabeth that helped to make the British people what they are.

The Customs cruisers were not allowed to seek for pirates unless specially instructed. We could deal with them if we caught them in the act, but the one and only case of that was a ridiculous fiasco, and it happened to that former pirate-catcher Stewart. Rounding a headland he came on two junks fighting —a pirate and a trader—and like an old war-horse he once more smelt the battle. He went to general quarters, fired those modern guns of his—four-inch quick-firers and three-pounder Hotchkiss guns—and called away the boats to board. Because he had no magistrate he put the prisoners in irons, and towed their junk all the long way to Canton city—a hundred miles or more—and when he got there the discovery was made that it was the victim he had captured—he had let the pirate go.

Once, night-cruising in a pinnace, I saw three junks engaged in a little battle, their smooth-bore guns flashing and banging in the darkness. It was difficult to know what should be done. There were those round shots lobbing from that triangular affair ; but eventually I boarded. All three were peaceful traders and each had thought the other two were pirates.

The only real chance I had at pirates came many years later when I was Coast Inspector at Shanghai. It failed. Yet I was pleased with the attempt ; it was such an evolution—in the naval sense. At ten o'clock one night the cable company telephoned that Saddles Island lighthouse had been attacked by pirates. The news had come to Gutzlaff—the cable station —by boat ; and the keepers had appealed for help. I thought a bit, then rang up the Harbour Master and asked him to engage for immediate use a mail tender and to have a launch awaiting me. I drove the four miles into town and boarded a Chinese cruiser anchored in the river. The Captain was on shore, but I told the First Lieutenant I wanted fifty men armed for a landing party and two Maxim guns to be ready in an hour's time. I had no authority for that sort of thing, but that did not matter ; and at eleven the party started down the river. At Woosung we wakened the captain of a war junk—one of those archaic, high-sterned, brilliantly-painted and flag-bedizened craft—whose nominal duty was pirate-hunting. We told him to come with us. He came reluctantly—it looked too much like the real thing. We wanted him for his authority, such as it was.

It was a seventy miles' journey to the Saddles, and on the way the Lieutenant and I made the war-junk captain talk. He had been in them all his life and had risen from the ranks. How many pirates had he caught ? None ; not only so, he had never seen one—and did not want to. He did his duty ; he took his periodic cruise among the islands and showed the flag ; and he drew his pay, and doubtless the pirates supplemented it. It was a pleasant life ; he did not wish it marred. And in all this there was no dereliction of his duty ; he was supposed—on paper—to hunt for pirates, but he was not expected to.

I am sorry, but this story ends quite lamely. By the time we arrived at Saddles, the pirates had left some hours before. They had not touched our station ; they had held the village up to ransom—a few hundred dollars—and carried off some girls. It was hard luck that an expedition so promptly undertaken should not have scored success.

At Canton I was officially consulted about the pirate question in the delta. The trouble was that any suspect was immediately claimed by the nearest village as being a peaceful member of it, and the local head-men and even officials of a higher grade would endorse the statement. The minor officials on the water side were in the pay of pirates. I reported that without the provision of identity cards to all the population in the delta, I saw no means of any service stopping piracy ; and this was but another way of saying that nothing could be done with the general administration as it was.

At a later date a curious opportunity about piracy was thrust at me. The rebellion had occurred, the Manchu dynasty had gone, Yuan Shih-kai was President of the so-called republic, when I visited Peking. Then was put to me a proposition. It was put by persons of position and responsibility and may have emanated from the President himself. The idea was that I should form a foreign-officered fleet of gunboats to suppress piracy and prevent the smuggling of arms. I should be trusted, free and untrammelled as no foreigner had ever been before. No more was put to me than that ; no details ; no reference to the difficulties involved.

I took a day or two to think things over. To the adventurer-administrator could a better chance be offered ? It was most attractive on the surface. Of course, the real object was not pirate-catching, but the suppression of illicit trade in arms as a measure of precaution against a counter revolution. If Yuan —the one strong man—could keep his grip and consolidate himself, the commander of a force that had been a factor in his power would have a very good position. But, as the question simmered in my mind, there rose a strong warning not to touch it. That fleet would be disliked. The provincial authorities—whether loyal to Yuan or not—would not co-operate ; I should be left to function only on the sea and so be ineffective. And besides I had already heard whispers from my naval friends in Yuan's entourage of a flirting with Imperial ambitions—a fatal thing that almost certainly must bring disaster. So I declined on the grounds of that provincial difficulty.

3. MISSIONARIES

Of course I came in contact with the missionary question. Regarding it I was neither antagonistic nor generally critical, nor greatly sympathetic, nor uninterested—a neutral sort of attitude. With the present situation I am not concerned, but only with the past. One thing seems plain. The main factor in the question was not what was best for China ; it was freedom for a force that is impossible to control—the force of religious impulse with all the goodness and all the evil of which history shows it is possessed.

Christ said ‘ Go teach all nations.’ In effect He said ‘ Go teach mankind that progress lies in altruism,’ and thus laid down a law of evolution. For the purpose of the safekeeping of that teaching He placed the picture of it in a simple frame of ceremony and utterances suitable to and in the language of the time.

Now I do not say that missionaries in China have failed to teach the lesson of that picture ; but undoubtedly it has been largely hidden by the details with which their churches have bedecked its frame, each in a different way and each claiming that their way was right and, of course, the others wrong. There is, or was, a gamut of some forty of them from Roman Catholics to Holy Shakers, teaching as many different tenets.

A highly educated Chinese said to me : ‘ What Christ taught is beneficially applicable to all mankind and that places him as the greatest Sage the world has known ; but the man-made dogmas of your churches, while presumably serving a purpose for the people for whom they were intended, are to us worse than useless. We view them as superstitions at least as wild and foolish as those in any Eastern faith ; and we take it as an insult to our intelligence to be asked to believe in such ideas as transubstantiation or the virgin birth.’

Diversity and antagonism of creeds, dogmas as varied as they are unintelligible, are factors in the general attempt to propagate the Christian faith which inhibit its success among a cultured Eastern people. Missionary enterprise should not, however, be judged by the standards that are applicable to other activities of man. It is a reaction to deep-seated forces. Religion, as a means to altruism, is an essential factor in man's evolutionary track. We could not shed it if we would ; it is as much a part of us as are, say, to the reindeer its spreading antlers. Here is not the place to enlarge upon this subject ; the little that is said is only to indicate my attitude towards the missionaries and their work.

They have done good. They have spread Christ's teaching at all events to some extent, and by their hospitals they have touched healingly the fringe of suffering. They have done evil also. There has been in the past unwise influence in Chinese litigation, for example ; and it has been inevitable that, in a country where family unity is a first principle, they have done harm by setting members of it against each other. To attempt to put the good and evil in the balance would be futile. Whichever way it tipped would make no difference. There is one thing only that can affect them, and that is the degree of Chinese toleration. It is affecting them just now.

It can be assumed that all have been earnest men and women acting according to their lights and to the tenets and instructions of their missions. That some have been unwise, some hard in nature and some with insufficient culture for their work, goes without saying. It could not, among the mass of them, be otherwise ; and that is all I have to say about the subject in a general way. Of my personal experiences with missionaries there are many stories I could tell. Here are but four of them.

A little Chinese island—Guiechow—lies in the Gulf of Tonking. Perhaps it is five miles long and wide. Cliffs surround it cut here and there by combes ending in beaches on which are crowded boats and nets and fishermen. There are no hills of any size ; the surface is an undulating tableland.

I knew the island well by sight, for it lay in the track of steamers on the way to Pakhoi, the southernmost treaty port of China. There came a time when it was convenient for the Customs cruiser—in which I was making an inspection trip—to anchor off the island for the night. A party of us went on shore. We were received by the fishermen with grins of more than usual welcome, and then occurred a series of astonishments. The pathway up the gully, later seen winding among the undulating land, was wide and cared for—a thing I had never seen before in such a place. Round a corner of that path came some women, and, when they saw us, they lined up on the roadside, kneeling with their hands across their breasts. Usually a Chinese country-woman would merely look the other way when she passed a foreigner, and a girl might flee, owing to stories told her by her mother ; but here this attitude of reverence. What could it mean ? It embarrassed us, and we passed on. Glancing back I saw them standing in a group, seemingly with an air of astonished disappointment.

We reached the summit of a rise and looked down in a dell, where lay a village clustered round something we had never seen before in China—a little Norman church, cruciform, with square tower and aisles and transepts, for all the world like a village church in England. On descending to the village we found the priest, a Frenchman, some sixty years of age, who welcomed us with obvious pleasure and fine courtesy and took us to his presbytère and gave us wine—good burgundy. In answer to our questions he told us of his life, and his life had been Guiechow and nothing else.

He had landed there some forty years before as its first missionary. He explained the advantage of an isolated little island for mission work—no officials, no gentry with their philosophic views of Chinese culture, no competition from the protestants, no interference of any kind. In the course of years he had converted every man and woman on the island, and now Christianity was accepted as the normal thing. Their reverence for his priesthood had become unsuitably great, and in their isolation from the outer world they thought every foreigner a kind of priest and rendered him obeisance. They took the ' Bonjour, Madame ' from the French naval officers—

on their rare visits—as a form of benediction. 'They knelt to you too, did they, and you took no notice of them? Well, I 'll have to make some sort of explanation.'

With great modesty he disclaimed any credit for his great success. It had been just a miraculous ending to his early struggles. He had designed and built the church himself with voluntary labour—a copy of his native village church in Normandy. Once or twice a year he might get a visit from a French man-of-war—this explained his wine—but otherwise he never saw a foreigner. How often did he go on leave? 'I went home to France some twenty years ago; since then I have never left the island. Desire to go? Perhaps, but no intention; I mean my bones to rest under the shadow of my church and among my people.'

We were steaming down the Yangtsze in a large paddle-boat. She was Chinese-owned, so on either bow was a large eye to help her see the way. It was summer time and hot, and we lay in long cane chairs beneath the awning, and read and dozed and sometimes talked. Next to me was an American missionary lady of uncertain age with whom I had thought I ought to hold some conversation but so far had not done so. We were now leaving the alluvial plain with the broad expanse of river and were entering a narrow hill-girt passage—a strategic place with modern forts. It was a spot where something very sad had happened a little time before.

There was a Norwegian gunner, a shipmate with me in a Customs cruiser, who, in his younger days, had been a hard drinker. And then he got religion—got it very thoroughly—became most extraordinarily reformed, and for years had been a model character. In the Japanese war he had got appointed to the fort and camp; later became, in effect, its commandant with charge of a regiment of soldiers; and he married a Chinese girl from a neighbouring mission station. A year or so later he found her *flagrante delicto* with a Chinese sergeant. The discovery so upset him that he took to drink once more. When he recovered from the bout he was mad with remorse and shame at his relapse; he fell in the regiment and formed a square, and from the centre he lectured the men on sin and expiation, and then he shot himself.

So here I found a topic for my neighbour. ‘ A very pathetic tragedy happened in that fort a little time ago. Would you care to hear about it ? ’ This remark served to start a flow of unpunctuated breathless speech, the purpose of the close continuity of which was to avoid a loss of innings ; but I punctuate to make the reading easier.

‘ Well, I guess there is no need to tell me about that. I guess that there is nothing about it I don’t know ; but you call it pathetic and I don’t. I call it disgusting to get drunk like that and then to shoot himself in public ; most disgusting, and we thought he was a real nice man. That makes it all the worse. And that girl was such a nice little thing, and we expected from them such an uplifting influence in the camp.’ There was ever so much more ; that is but a sample.

When she had finished I told the story as I knew it. ‘ Well, I guess you seem to know quite a lot about it. Perhaps you are right. When I come to think about it we did not like the way she left us after the shooting and did not come back. But in any case, for that man to give way to temptation in that way was a very, very disgusting thing.’

‘ My dear lady, in the kind of life you lead it seems to me doubtful if you can know what real temptation is and how irresistible it may be.’

‘ Well, if it ’s irresistible I guess I don’t know about it, but I think that is the excuse you men make for doing what you want to.’ And the lady snorted.

‘ The subject is rather a delicate one, involved as it is liable to be with primitive instincts and passions, but, if you will allow me, I could present my view in a manner you would not object to.’

‘ Go right straight ahead. There is nothing you can say will hurt me. Let ’s have that view of yours.’

‘ I will put it this way. Suppose it was a deadly sin to scratch your nose, and if you did it you would surely go to hell ; and suppose that having got you in my power I tickled it with a feather. You would wriggle and squirm your nose about and so withstand the temptation for a time, but in the end you 'd scratch it and go to hell quite cheerfully.'

And we never spoke again.

Once more I was travelling on the Yangtsze in a Chinese steamer. The accommodation for foreigners was in a house upon the bridge deck. Beneath that deck was one long unpartitioned space in which many hundreds of native passengers were carried. Some had bunks; others lay on the deck surrounded by their bundles, and that deck was completely covered by them. The air in that space was thick with human fug and the reek of opium. Now I have always been an early riser, so when, on the first morning of our journey, I found I had slept until nine o'clock, I was very much astonished. I opened the door and looked in the saloon. Facing me quite close was a black-bearded priest. And here another puzzle. He was looking at me with utmost sternness, and—a curious combination—his nostrils were expanded and he stood sniffing at the air. Then he spoke. 'Are not you—a foreigner—ashamed to do such a thing? I cannot avoid expressing my disgust.' Of course I was flabbergasted at this wild and unprovoked attack, but obviously he was labouring under some strange delusion, and my feeling was one of interest rather than resentment. So I asked him what he meant; and he explained. There was a smell of opium in the saloon; he had traced it to my door just before I opened it; then from my cabin poured a volume of the smell, so he assumed I had been smoking opium. Now with the contrast of fresh air I realized the extent to which my cabin reeked; I sought the reason and found it—a defective ventilator from the deck below, which explained my oversleeping.

The priest, of course, was apologetic. He was more; he was remorse-stricken at having thought evil on unfounded grounds; and he was full of gratitude for the way in which I had met his wild attack. It was doubtless under the joint influence of these emotions that he later told the story of his tragedy.

He had meant, he said, to lock that story up for good within his breast. As there were degrees of physical disfigurement that were indecent to expose, so there were mental anguishes which called for silence. But somehow he now felt an irresistible desire to impose—as he put it—the story of his troubles on me ; and then he would really shut it up for ever.

He was a German and a Jesuit. His age was forty, and for ten years he had been in charge of a mission in the far interior. In course of time he had come to see that mission work in China, as carried out, worked more for evil than for good. There was the interference with and condemnation of Confucianism, a cult of ethics which formed the matrix of the Chinese state. This interference was a serious disintegrating factor ; instead of condemning Confucianism, Christianity should have been grafted on to it as, indeed, had been the policy of that great missionary, Matteo Ricci, in the fifteenth century. Then there was the use which converts made of the status their religion gave them ; it influenced the magistrates in litigation ; and so on. So he had found his conscience and his reason opposed to the Order's policy as to mission work in China. He had sworn obedience to that Order ; that oath was absolutely sacred to him though no oath could bind the intellect or conscience. What then could he do except confess the opinion forced on him, even though the certainty of grave condemnation stared him in the face—they would condemn him as a traitor and a heretic ; what else could he do than make his confession and then obediently take whatever might be coming, and his willingness to do so had been clearly stated. And now he had had his answer, brief and stern. He was ordered to Italy, where in some institution he would be for the rest of his life employed in a menial capacity.

On a journey up the Middle Yangtsze the only other passengers on board were a young Quaker missionary and his bride —a slim young thing and pretty, and so demure with her downcast eyes and her neat grey frock. I labelled her at once the Mouse-girl ; and with my appreciation of her came anxiety. My anxiety was about my friend the Captain, his reputation, and what I feared would happen.

There is a book of travels by a lady, in which Captain Mutter[1] is mentioned in some such words as these: ‘He had a unique affluence of bad language brought out with thrilling and damnatory emphasis; and which the presence of neither clergy nor ladies deterred.’ It was a fact that Captain Mutter had made of profanity an art; and this advertisement of his ability so pleased him that he framed the extract and hung it in a prominent position in the saloon.

But the accomplishment he took the greater pride in was the telling of his stock of stories—pink stories and very funny, and, when the audience was suitable, the vulgarity was redeemed by the keenness of their humour. But how very unsuitable as an audience would that Mouse-girl be; and I dreaded the first dinner when the Captain would surely try to tell me of his latest.

I did my best; I told him I had already heard it; but he understood my object and it but spurred him on his evil way, and of course he had another story and he told it, and made me most unhappy for a time. But only for a time; for when the climax came—a quite indecent one, but very witty—I saw a snigger forming in the corners of the Mouse-girl's mouth, her hand beneath the table dug her husband in the leg, and soon both were laughing heartily. They could not help it.

It was the Captain's art to play a tune on strings of varied interests, so now he changed his mode and spoke of memory—of how he knew the Prayer Book word-perfect from cover to cover, and he gave an exhibition of the fact. Then, dinner finished, we went outside; the Captain and the missionary walked the deck, while the girl and I stood leaning on the rail. There was a full moon, a bright planet nearly in conjunction, and the mystery of the river in the dark; so we were silent for a time. I wondered what was passing in her mind, and then the Mouse-girl spoke. ‘I have learnt something this evening. I have learnt what a humorous side there may be to vice.’

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[1] I feel confident, from my memory of him, that Captain Mutter, whose address I have been unable to obtain, will forgive me for telling this story without his leave.

I want a place to mention Father Froc, and, although he was not a missionary, I will put him here. He was a Jesuit, a scientist of world repute, and Director of the Siccawei Observatory near Shanghai. We were associated in typhoon warnings, and I claim that we produced the best system for that purpose that exists. I say ‘ we,’ but it was he who was usually the leader. He told the seaman where the typhoon was and gave him isobars for a quarter round the world ; he traced for him day by day the storm’s position from its inception in the distant regions of the Pacific Ocean, and he taught him its probabilities of movement ; then left him to exercise his judgment. We fought the Hongkong Observatory on the subject, and Japan ; and in the end we got our code accepted on the whole Far Eastern coast. That was one side of our association. He—the Jesuit—and we—Church of England people—became great friends ; the family has a sort of reverent affection for him, and we have kept in contact with him to this day.

XII

CHINESE POLITICS

1. THE DYNASTIC REVOLUTION

Sir Robert Hart went home—nominally on leave; but we knew we had seen the last of our great chief. Mr. Bredon, the Deputy I.G., was passed over for succession; and so was Mr. A. E. Hippisley, an expected appointee; and in 1910 Mr. F. A. Aglen got the acting post and was afterwards confirmed. I happened to be in Peking a few days after his appointment, and he secured at once my loyalty by his modesty and earnestness about it.

It was shortly after this that the Shanghai conservancy affair occurred, and my diary shows that a year later I visited Peking and found—to quote it—'Conservancy matters have been referred to I.G. very opportunely, for he has made arrangements for me to see Alfred Sze (an official of the Foreign Office) and has given me a free hand.' I must have given the Government people satisfaction in this affair, for when I left by train for Hankow I found a private car—with cooks and servants and food and wine—had been placed at my disposal; and there was another and rather embarrassing attention that was accorded me. In those days the Peking-Hankow train did not run at night, and, when we arrived at the stoppage, I found a deputation of French engineers—it was a French-built line—on the platform, and I was told that they had been instructed to entertain me; so would I come at once to dinner. And when I went I found the engineers had wives—young and charming—but none of the party could speak a word of English, and I, though half French, knew very little of the language.[1] So there was an awkward situation. From their point of view I must be a very important person to have been given a private car and to have entertainment ordered for me ; so they were stiff, formal and watchful—the latter very disconcerting to one not accustomed to be important—and there was not a smile upon their lips. Positively something had to be done to relieve the situation, so as best I could I told them of my mother, of my regrets that I could not speak her lovely language, and how all that I had learnt from her were terms of endearment. I paused ; and then from one of those young wives, ' Monsieur, s'il vous plait, ne voulez-vous pas commencer ? ' I had just enough of them to go the round ; it broke the ice, and in our struggle at mutual understanding we became a very merry party.

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[1] To counteract the supposed disadvantage of our mother being French, she was not allowed to teach us her language. It was supposed it would make us frenchified. But it was not only on our side that this national

A few weeks later I was called to Peking again. The Waichiaopu—the Foreign Office—wished to consult me further about conservancy affairs. I was in the middle of most interesting conversations—Waichiaopu, Sir John Jordan, and the Inspector-General—and I was the leader in them, when I got a cable from my wife, who had gone home some weeks before, that our son—he was four years old and a sturdy boy—had died. I dropped everything and started home next day across Siberia ; and the coming into effect of my conservancy scheme of 1901 was delayed for another year or two. Before I left, Sir John Jordan wished me to tell him the results to date of my discussions with the Waichiaopu ; but I had given my word that they would not be so repeated. My wish to break my word was very strong, not only on account of the British Minister's desire but for the benefit of the situation.[1] Right or wrong, I stuck to it against the general interest. I was not backward in unscrupulousness of another kind when circumstances called

prejudice existed. When my sister was to be married to an English General my mother's brother, a French General, was invited to the ceremony. He replied quite seriously: ' What, come to la perfide Albion ? Never, unless it is to conquer ! ' I am glad that later we became great friends, and that he visited our country peaceably.

[1] Here is a charming letter that Sir John sent me the day before I left :— ' Pray do not forget to let me have a copy of that paper before you leave, as otherwise I shall be lost. I cannot thank you sufficiently for your goodness and self-denial in giving us the benefit of your assistance in such trying circumstances, and I regret keenly that we are no longer to have your knowledge and great experience to guide us.'

for it. When I was an apprentice in a sailing ship I stole—at a very real risk—a quantity of stores in the interests of justice; and once—as will be told later—I misappropriated a very large sum of money for the general good; but one's word is an affair which touches one's honour more closely than any other.

I was only a month in England, but I took advantage of it to study chart production; and when I returned I arranged with a Chinese publisher to install a camera for the purpose. It had to have a special building; it ran on rails; it took a plate of about four foot six by three; and its lens alone cost £400. It was one of two or three of the best outfits for the purpose in the world; and so we started chart work, of course with the Inspectorate's permission.

I returned to China just as the revolution against the dynasty had begun. That was in October 1911. It was not an organized affair. Sun Yat-sen, the protagonist—from a distance—of revolution, had nothing to do with it. It was just an accidental mutiny which developed into revolution because every one was ripe for it. The general discontent had spread and grown. The Empress Dowager got scared and in 1906 promised constitutional government, and then in 1908 she died, having first proclaimed a three-year-old successor and a Regent and having presumably arranged for the killing of Kwanghsü, the imprisoned Emperor. Under the Regency things went from bad to worse. It ordered Yuan Shih-kai—the one strong man—to resign his offices and did everything it should not.

A sidelight on the situation is contained in a letter which I wrote in 1907 to Lady Lugard—her husband was then Governor of Hongkong:—' I believe the question occupying the minds of the high Chinese officials is that of declaring an heir to the throne. The Empress Dowager is almost beyond work, and the ease with which she is swayed one way or the other is the cause of the present unstable condition of affairs. If a suitable descendant of one of the Chinese dynasties could be found, a strong effort would be made to nominate him. Such descendants can be found but only among peasants and small farmers—so any move in that direction is now considered unlikely. I think that almost certainly a young Manchu will be selected—a mere child—and then a Regency of Chinese and Manchus appointed. . . . There is a fairly strong opinion among diplomatic people that there must be a revolution—that blood must be shed—before a thorough change in China's government methods be effected. All history, I suppose, points to the likelihood of this; but the history from which that is learnt is not Chinese history. For myself I believe in the greater likelihood of a bloodless revolution.'

With the outbreak of the revolution the Regency recalled Yuan Shih-kai and placed the matter of suppressing it on him. So he took his armies South and beat the rebels, and having done so joined them and became their leader, persuaded the Manchus to abdicate, and became the first President of the so-called Republic. Had the old Buddha been alive, he would have been loyal to her; but he owed nothing to the Regency. Like others, he knew that the country was ripe for revolution, and he learnt that Western sympathy was with it—a quite important factor. It is improbable he held that view when he took the commission from the Regency; but it grew, I think, as affairs developed. For many years he had been a leader, and he knew that there was none other in the field worthy of that name; but he must have seen that to lead on behalf of that rotten Regency offered no chances of success, so he made a *volte-face* and said to the rebels, 'I myself will be your leader.'

Sun Yat-sen came from America before Yuan had declared himself; they made him Provisional President, and doubtless he thought it was he who had engineered the revolution. A curious character: hopelessly impractical in all he did; unintelligible in what he wrote and said; earnest and patriotic beyond a doubt; he can be credited with honesty; and he served, and in memory still serves, as the ikon of republicanism in China. It is appropriate that this is so, for republicanism is impracticable in China for some generations to come; there will continue a government that is called republican, but that is a different matter; the name alone—apart from realities—

is a very potent thing, so potent that a reversion to a monarchy can be considered quite impossible.

Here and elsewhere in this book I give in brief my version of events, not of course as a contribution to history but merely as background features for my story. But there is one little bit of real unrecorded history that I can tell. I got it from a Chinese friend who was present at the first meeting between Yuan and Sun. The latter said : ‘ I am an agitator. I have been that all my life, and it is all I am fit for. I am no administrator ; and so I gladly pass things on to you.’ If that is not apocryphal, Sun for once said something that was quite intelligible.

So the revolution was accomplished—the most civilized and bloodless revolution of its magnitude which the world has ever seen ; and Yuan Shih-kai became established at Peking in the palace of former Emperors. In deference to democratic views, the old insignia of rank—the embroidered robes, the coloured buttons, the Peacock and other feathers, the Orders of the Double Dragon—were thrown into the limbo of the past ; and in their place appeared Western military uniforms, frock-coats, full evening dress in the middle of the day and a batch of brand new Orders—the Excellent Crop, the Striped Tiger, and others of similarly curious names.

2. YUAN SHIH-KAI

A constitution had been framed at Nanking in the early days of the revolution ; and of course it was a visionary thing based on the supposition that parliamentary government was forthwith a possibility in China. Yuan subscribed to it perforce, and put it into operation until its utter uselessness was evidenced—the members merely squabbled and dealt with the pettiest of matters. Then Yuan was obliged to abrogate the constitution for a time and make himself Dictator. This gave Sun Yat-sen the opportunity to resume his functions as an agitator, and he at once set to work the machinery of the Kuomintang ; but what Yuan had done was so obviously necessary that he would have had the support of all—except professional agitators and the disgruntled members of the abrogated parliament—if only he had said: 'I took my oath to the Nanking constitution, and I have given it a trial; but quite obviously it cannot work without a period of preparation, and so it has been necessary that for a time I exercise full power. I reassert my oath of allegiance to the republic, and as soon as possible will give effect to it in full.' If only he had said that and acted in accordance with it he might have won the game; but that is exactly what he did not do.

To understand what happened one must realize conditions in the palace—such a very different thing to his previous yamen at Tientsin. Those great red walls; those towering gates; the magnificence and the magnitude of it all, and the glamour. One can hardly doubt that, when the old Buddha was alive, he wondered what would happen when she—the already tottering prop of the Manchu dynasty—died. He would have had no imagination if he had not dreamt of possibilities. That a change of dynasty might come was more than whispered in those days. When Yuan was Governor at Chinanfu a famous soothsayer, at a feast, had prophesied great things for him and, curiously enough, still greater things—which could only mean Imperial honours—to an expectant Taotai on his staff. That would affect Yuan more than if it had been prophesied about himself.[1]

No doubt it was the potentialities of Yuan, in addition to that past betrayal of Kwanghsü, that caused his forced retirement by the Regency; and no doubt it was because even the latter was capable of seeing another danger, that only Yuan might avert, that it did not have him executed. But there came the revolution, and Yuan saw—not at once perhaps—how his game was to lead it; that therein lay the only chance to materialize his dream. So it can be taken that from the beginning of the emergency Yuan was tinged—I do not say tainted, because it was so very natural—with imperialistic dreams. But Yuan was a practical person, not a mere dreamer of dreams, and he would never have tried to make his dreams come true unless he considered the chances for doing so were good ; and he would have known they were impossible except with the general goodwill of the country.

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[1] Basse was at that feast and told me the story. The expectant Taotai was Tong Shao-yi.

But Yuan was in that monstrous palace ; and, being there, was no more in touch with the world that lay outside ; he became dependent on his entourage for all his information, and mostly they were sycophants pandering to his latent tendency of aspiration to the throne and seeking to turn it to their benefit. To that end they were prepared to do a monstrous gamble—and with loaded dice. They stood to win a mighty lot if they could engineer a monarchy—the son of one of them had married Yuan's daughter—and if their efforts failed, it would not matter much to them ; it would be Yuan who would have to stand the brunt. Having got as far as that no scruples would interfere with any action needed for the furtherance of their scheme.

How much Yuan knew of the machinations of that crowd it is impossible to say. My own information was that it was very little, and his dying words confirm that supposition : 'I did not wish to be Emperor ; those around me said that the people wanted a king and named me for the throne. I believed and was misled.'[1]

The leader of this very complicated and highly organized conspiracy was Liang Shih-yi, the Premier, who was and is, perhaps, the cleverest man in China. Under the dictatorship, named the Presidential System, there was a Senate, and Liang Shih-yi had it in his grip. The provinces were ruled by military governors who would find it impossible—at all events to start with—to question orders from Peking. Then there was a foreign adviser, an American—of all people in the world—who wrote a lengthy memorandum setting forth the virtues of constitutional government and its suitableness to China. So there were the means for the conspiracy to work with : an obsequious Senate, a set of frightened Military Governors, and an authoritative dictum. Against these were arrayed such public opinion as China was then capable of showing and the judgment of nearly every official outside the capital. Liang

[1] *The Fight for the Republic*, by Putnam Weale.

knew this well enough, but he counted on inertia giving him time enough to effect a *fait accompli*, and on then being able to maintain it with the army. So he set his scheme in motion. The Senate passed a law referring the question of a monarchy to a provincial referendum ; then the several provincial authorities were instructed to provide that the referendum should be favourable by manipulating who should be the voters. So one by one the petitions from the provinces came in praying that Yuan should ascend the throne ; and Yuan read them with gratified surprise at the ease with which so great a thing could be effected. He was the only one they could possibly deceive ; his deception could be their only purpose ; that fact alone is evidence of his ignorance of the machinations of Liang Shih-yi.

I was told that somewhere near the Coal Hill within the palace grounds, but partly cut off from it, had been established a printing office ; and that there were reproduced the provincial papers with such alterations as were needed for Yuan's deception.[1] So not only from the provincial petitions but in those papers he read of the clamour of the people for his kingship. Liang Shih-yi was a psychologist ; he knew how even with the strongest man one can play upon credulity where it marches with his wishes.

It seems probable and accords with my information that at that time Yuan was happily busy with ceremonial matters. There was a study of the robes of State of former dynasties ; tailors came to and fro ; samples were discussed and patterns chosen. I myself, introduced into the palace by my friends, saw Yuan's wardrobe ready for the enthronement. Yet at that time the country was in an uproar at the impending treachery to the constitution. A letter from a Chinese naval officer gives this little picture :—' Not only did the theatres give performances of the " Emperor's Dream " ; the news-vendors in the streets, while shouting out their papers, made comical allusions to Yuan, and these expressions became catchwords bandied about by children ; further, officials became outcasts among the merchants and the gentry.'

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[1] I have recently obtained reliable confirmation of this story.

But Liang Shih-yi had miscalculated the force of opposition. One by one the provinces declared against the monarchy ; and so eventually Yuan got to know the truth and issued a decree cancelling the Empire—a decree that merely caused derision and the cry that he must go. And now my friend Li—the Admiral—seceded with his fleet, and so ruined the principle that I had worked so hard for : that the fleet should never take a part in politics. I believe that it was when Yuan heard of this secession that he died from Bright's disease, aggravated by rage at the way in which he had been deceived. There is a ghastly story published that in his rage he slaughtered a favourite concubine ; I mention it only to say that unquestionably that story is not true.

I have told the tale of the monarchy attempt as I knew it at the time. As an impression I still believe it true—in outline ; but I was a strong partisan of Yuan, and it is more than possible that my picture of events gives too favourable an idea of his irresponsibility. There were many executions and several murders on his behalf, and of the latter a reputed one was of a peculiarly atrocious character. It is said that General Feng Kuo-cheng, being contemptuously opposed to the monarchy, had been marked for killing, and that my friend Admiral Tseng, who was devoted to Yuan—though I know that he disapproved his monarchical ambition—had been ordered to arrange it. Instead of doing so he warned Feng, and because of that was himself murdered in Shanghai. A short time before the murder I had an audience—referred to later—with the ' Emperor,' as he was already called, and he, knowing my association with Tseng, asked after him. Then he said, ' He is an honest man, isn't he ? ' As it was translated, that sentence was a question, and not a statement with an invitation for acquiescence. I was astonished at it and wondered what it meant. But I cannot believe that Yuan was a party to the murder of his devoted friend.

Whatever may be the truth about him the fact remains that men like Sir John Jordan, Sir Francis Aglen and, what is more significant, the foreign bankers, put their faith in Yuan ; for plainly he was the only man who could resolve the situation caused by the revolution—there was no one else to back. And, even when his intention to become an Emperor was known, the folly and the danger of it was not fully realized by foreigners; there was an assumption that he knew what he was doing ; but that of course was just what he did not know.

How I became involved as his active partisan will be told in another chapter ; here I will tell the story of my visits to Peking when Yuan was President. Among his entourage were several of my friends, ex-naval officers, and when I was in Peking in April 1914, they invited me to lunch in the palace, and after it I was to have an interview with Yuan. It had been some months before that I had prevented the fleet from going over to the rebels, and that was the explanation of why I was invited. I was being shown round the palace garden and was looking at the well down which the Pearl concubine, the favourite of the Emperor, was thrown by the orders of the Empress Dowager before she fled from her capital in the Boxer time, when I got a violent attack of gall-stone which later made me unconscious ; so that luncheon and the interview fell through. But in September 1915 the Inspector-General told me to come to Peking, as the Minister of the Navy wished to consult me. Some time previously the Ministry had made plans for a naval harbour at Nimrod Sound to the southward of Shanghai, and they had submitted it to the President for approval ; and he asked had Mr. Tyler's opinion on the project been obtained. Of course it had not—there was no reason why it should have been—but the President now called for it. So I was asked to come and bless the scheme, but instead of doing so I condemned it—financially and technically. The Minister was my friend, and I regretted to have to upset his project ; but he took it very well. Then I got a message from the President that he would promote me to the Second Class Order of the Excellent Crop because of what I had done to keep the navy loyal. I declined it because my chief, the Inspector-General, had not yet got it ; so I was given instead the Second Class of the Order of the Striped Tiger, which was then a military Order only, and therefore more interesting. I was told that there was strong opposition in the Council to giving this Order to a foreigner, but that the President insisted. And now the date was fixed for a private audience with Yuan ; but before I come to that there are other things to tell.

My special friend on Yuan's staff was certainly no sycophant. He was alive to the danger of the President's ambition and dreaded it. It was not he who told me of the printing press—that story came later and after Yuan's death—but he told me of the deception that was played upon the President—the withholding of the truth and the fabricated news. I asked, ' Why don't you undeceive him ? ' and got the answer, ' I wish I could, but it is quite impossible. It has gone too far ; think of those coronation robes I 've shown you ! Even if I told the truth and sacrificed my life—that would be certain—it would not alter the decision ; and it would but ruin the only chance that after all he may succeed.'

The idea, of course, occurred to me to tell the ' Emperor ' the truth about the situation ; once more I thought of how a single man may on occasion tip the balance of events ; my mind went back to that abortive Memorial that I wrote for Basse ; and I realized that there was no one but myself could do this thing. But it was not to be, if only because it was finally arranged that Sir Francis Aglen was also to be invited to the audience.

And so we met the ' Emperor.' The audience was a mere formality and compliment ; the only remark of note he made to me was that about the honesty of Admiral Tseng, to which reference has been made, and which still leaves me wondering as to what it meant. For the last time I saw a man whom, from my many previous interviews with him, I looked on as a friend : a heavy bulky figure of a man, asthmatic and apoplectic in appearance ; a very kindly look and smile, which gave—at all events to me—a sense of genial appreciation.

We saw him at the zenith of his being fooled, when he believed himself acclaimed throughout the land as Emperor, when his mind was bent on the design of robes and the form of ceremonies. And a few weeks later he learnt the truth and died. A great man was Yuan Shih-kai and a tragic failure.

3. THE SECOND REVOLUTION

I have already stated that after my failure in 1906 as a Naval Secretary I was for three years left in the trough of the wave of happenings, though there was always the Marine Department to keep me occupied; but then came the conservancy consultation at Peking, my visit home, the anti-Manchu revolution, and from the date of the latter I was again on the crest of events—in that minor way of mine.

For some years I had seen little of the navy, although owing to the loss of Weihaiwei, first to the Japanese and later to the British, it had no home and so had made Shanghai its base with an Admiralty at Kiangnan Dock—where I had played at being a Naval Secretary. But now Sah had gone, and Li—my Co-Commander of the Flagship in the war of '94—reigned in his stead. When the second revolution came—the one against Yuan—I wondered why the fleet was left there, as Shanghai was a centre of Kuomintang activities; and when, on the 17th July 1913, the arsenal was about to be attacked by rebels having their headquarters in the settlements—they recruited their forces there, and there too they had signal stations from which they flashed signals to their front—I began to wonder more; and, though I was fed up with the navy, I thought I would go and see what was its situation. The fleet, let it be explained, was anchored off the arsenal. What I learnt was serious enough. The day before Li had called a conference of the Captains; at it two of them had put their Mauser pistols on the table and declared in favour of revolt, of helping the forces of the Kuomintang in their attack upon the arsenal. These two dominated the council; and, as was usual, there was nothing private at that conference—a fringe of sailors' heads lined the skylight; and so the crews acclaimed revolt. The situation looked as bad as it could be—for Yuan Shih-kai.

With the fleet gone over to the rebels they would command the Yangtsze river and Yuan would lose at least a half of his advantages. It was a monstrous impending tragedy for China: so it seemed to me, for like most other foreigners my faith lay with Yuan Shih-kai; the others were mere impractical visionaries who could only continue a state of chaos.

I asked Li if nothing could be done, and he replied that nothing could; so it looked quite hopeless. Yet, with no notion of the use of it, I now asked, 'Would money save the situation?' At that Li brightened up and answered, 'Money would save any situation in China.' Then he went on to explain about affairs. For two months the fleet had not had its pay. The men were not like soldiers—mere riff-raff; they were men with homes, with families and parents to support; and there was the Kuomintang offering them their pay if they would take the Southern side. There was no one except those two Captains with their Mausers who wanted to rebel; but the belief was growing that the Kuomintang would win.

'How much money would be needed to meet arrears of pay and to provide for general maintenance for a month or two?' —'About a million taels; but to be of any use it would have to be got immediately, for the rebels may attack at any moment, and then my ships will join them.' I drove back the four miles to the settlement in my Olsmobile—its one cylinder horizontal and fore and aft—in a thoughtful mood. The Manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank was A. G. Stephen; and I had not yet met him. I reached his office at five o'clock and told him of the situation. The Group Banks held a considerable reserve of Chinese Government money against its liabilities for loans, and my idea was that somehow use could be made of that. But the banks would never hand it over to the Admiral —it would not be wise to do so. A foreign administrator of the fund must be appointed; but quite definitely they must not count on me, for it would be most improper for a Customs man to so involve himself in party politics. Stephen said very little, as was his way in business; but he drafted a cable.

The next morning I again visited the arsenal—the rebel lines around it had not yet interfered with traffic—to learn more of what the situation was; and Mr. R. B. Mauchan, the Engineer Manager of the dock, introduced me to Admiral Tseng, who was in command of a force of Marines guarding the arsenal. Tseng was a trusted man of Yuan Shih-kai, and at once I knew him as a leader—as a real man from a Western point of view. I told him of what I had done, and he said that if by any chance the money came before midday on the morrow the situation might be saved; otherwise the rebellion would succeed, for he expected the attack to-morrow night. Two years later Tseng was murdered in the settlement. From the first we were mutually trusting friends; he was one of four or five Chinese that I have dealt with, my admiration and respect for whom was not tinged with a sense of Western prejudice.

That day H.M.S. *Newcastle* arrived with Admiral Jerram and I got a message that he would like to see me. Fulford, the Consul-General—acting temporarily at Shanghai—came shortly afterwards, and I told them what the situation was and what I had done. I made it clear that it was a choice of evils. It might be a choice between my intervention and Yuan's downfall; but my intervention would be an evil. In the position of the Customs Service for one of its employees to take such a hand in politics had serious disadvantages. Even what I had done might involve my resignation, for it would inevitably be generally known. The Admiral was encouraging and complimentary. The Consul-General was cold and unappreciative, and I did not blame him; I did not like the part I took myself.

I liked the situation even less next morning when Stephen told me that the Group Banks had placed a quarter million taels to my credit—with more to follow if I needed it—on condition that I would administer the fund. I reminded Stephen of what I had said; he shrugged his shoulders, and I left him and walked along the river front and tried to get an inspiration how to act; but it would not come. In a state of indecision I went back to my office, and there I found a telegram from the Inspectorate—the first of two—which made me free to act at my discretion.[1]

That altered everything; the main responsibility was no longer mine; but even so I would not function from the Coast Inspector's office. I sent my secretary to rent a flat and hire furniture to serve as a naval office; and then I motored to the arsenal and saw Tseng and Li. They were to call another meeting of the Captains—those Mauser pistol men must not be allowed to dominate it this time—and the news was to be disseminated among the men. I told them of my simple method of administration. I would make advances—I gave a cheque at once—but I would not see a voucher. When the advance was finished they would provide a summary of expenditure for each vessel—it included vessels up the Yangtsze—under various headings: wages, coal and stores, etc. This summary to be signed by both Li and Tseng; its scrutiny would suffice for me; it would be for them and not for me to guard against irregularities. It was arranged that Mr. Chen, Mauchan's colleague at the dock and an Engineer-Admiral, should be Paymaster-in-Chief at my new office, and I would function as the Treasurer. The scheme worked like a clock; there was never a hitch or a doubt.

That day when Mills, my cartographer, was returning to the office after lunch, he was stopped by a Chinese in the street whom he knew to be associated with Sun Yat-sen. 'You are in Mr. Tyler's office, aren't you? Please tell him that what he is doing is a very unhealthy occupation.' Sun Yat-sen, whom I knew personally, lived close to me four miles in the country. His house had a guard of French municipal policemen; but there was no police for me in the days that followed, when I had some reason to fear what Sun's emissaries might do to me and mine.

The attack on the arsenal began on the night of the 22nd July, so in the saving of the situation there had not been much margin. It continued every day and chiefly in the night. The fleet remained quiescent ; it was not until the 25th that it was used against the rebel forces, and then occurred an extraordinary affair. After dinner, from the windows of my house, we could hear and see the bombardment, and my family was greatly interested. But soon I realized that shell were falling round about my neighbourhood, which was nowhere near the line of fire against the rebels ; the settlement was being deliberately bombarded. I guessed at once that it was one or both of the ships of those Mauser pistol Captains who did it in wanton spite, and for the purpose of creating embarrassment for Li ; and I drove in and told the Consul-General, Sir Everard Fraser, that this outrage was of course not a real attack, and urged that the difficulties of Li and Tseng should not be increased by too much notice of the incident.

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[1] That telegram was from Mr. C. A. V. Bowra, the Chief Secretary, and sent, I believe, on his own responsibility, the Inspector-General being absent at the seaside. It was a considerable responsibility to shoulder.

The attack on the arsenal had its base in the settlements, and chiefly in the French. In the latter recruiting stations were undisguisedly established and the settlement authorities did not interfere. This did not mean that their sympathies were with the Kuomintang ; it was Yuan in whom the Westerners had faith. The extraordinary situation resulted partly from inertia but chiefly from that mad obsession of the duty to render asylum, which has already been referred to.

In the early days of the rebellion I used to report progress of the fighting by telegram sent through Stephen ; they were addressed ' Tyler to Chinese Government ' and ended up ' please inform President.'

On the 30th July appears this entry in my diary : ' The remarkable affair of the Japanese launch and the torpedo occurred last night. There appears to be strong evidence of the complicity of the Japanese navy ; but with what object it is impossible to say.' That is all that was recorded. It referred to the arrest during the night of a Japanese commercial launch that was fitted with a spar torpedo rigged and ready for use. It was not an amateur affair ; it was a naval spar torpedo, but I have no recollection that it was proved to be of Japanese design. I was just left guessing as to what this thing could mean. The Japanese Government was opposed to Yuan

Shih-kai. It was opposed to any consolidation of the country, for that might bring about revenge for '94. It was concerned with keeping China in a state of turmoil. But even so it seems hardly credible that that apparently attempted outrage could have been by order ; it is more probable that it was a free-lance affair. So far as I know no official notice was taken of the matter.[1]

The entrance to Shanghai harbour was guarded by the well-armed Woosung forts, the garrisons of which with the local troops in general had gone over to the Kuomintang ; and when the rebellion broke out a squadron in the North—with Admiral Liu, the Commander-in-Chief—was sent down to capture them and relieve the arsenal. Liu arrived outside on the 29th July, and wrote and asked me for advice and help. Would I come out and take charge of operations against the Woosung forts ? If it had not been for that factor of the reputation of the Customs Service I might have gone ; but positively I drew the line at belligerent acts.

The relief forces had landed on the Yangtsze bank and marched overland, and by the 10th August Tseng was ready to attack the Woosung forts from landward. I had wished Li to attack from inside the river. There was a berth on which bore only two six-inch guns. To get there he would have to run the gauntlet for some minutes—ten perhaps—of the fire from the bigger guns, but I thought the risk was good enough ; and once he had secured that berth he would enfilade the whole string of batteries. But Li would not do it ; and a British gunnery Lieutenant whose ship was at Shanghai said the attempt would be very risky; and as it proved there was no need. The forts were wavering; they had flown a white flag one day, then hauled it down again. On the 13th Tseng's troops were advancing across the plain and minor fighting was going on. Then Mauchan got the news that the forts were flying the Government ensign as a sign of submission. They might change their minds again; the thing to do was to arrange at once for acceptance of capitulation. So Mauchan, Chen, the Paymaster, and I took a launch to Woosung, above which Li was anchored, and I tried to persuade him to move down his ships; but he would not. He said that the *Lienshing*, a despatch vessel in the rebels' hands and anchored lower down, had been fitted with torpedoes. It was therefore decided to go outside to Admiral Liu and get him to take the necessary action; but on the way there lay the *Lienshing*—a small vessel and unarmed except for a couple of light guns. She looked quite peaceful; the men on deck also looked quite friendly; so we boarded and found her officers had left. I was going below when I felt a sort of warning and desisted, and told the others not to. A commercial launch was passing up the river, and we hailed her and arranged that she should take the *Lienshing* in tow and deliver her to the arsenal; and so we slipped her cables and off she went. Let me tell what happened to her. Either that day or the next a party of naval students visited her and some went below, and then her after-part blew up; the deck was ripped right out and a number of the boys were killed. She had been fitted by the rebels as a booby trap. That warning proved quite useful.

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[1] I still possess the draft letter to Admiral Nawa—Senior Naval Officer at the time—on this matter, which, on consideration of its possible results, I decided should not be sent by Admiral Li. It ran as follows :—

'I have the honour to inform you that yesterday the River Police brought to my vessel a steam launch to the bow of which was fitted a contact torpedo. This launch was found by the River Police between the Osaka Shosen Kaisha and the Nisshin Kisen Kaisha wharves, so disposed and with such fittings on board as obviously to lead to the conclusion that it was intended to be discharged against one of my vessels.

'I have conclusive evidence that the launch was bought a few days ago by a Japanese from Messrs. Wheelock and Co. In these circumstances I have the honour to suggest to you the desirableness of arranging for a joint inquiry into this remarkable occurrence.'

At the time when we were busy with her, a small gunboat arrived, sent down by Li but with no orders. And now I was led into a burlesque escapade of the very kind I wanted to avoid. To explain this I must explain my relationship with Mauchan.[1] He was a fiery Scotsman intensely eager in the Northern cause; prepared to do anything; to run any risks for its furtherance; he was the sort of man to lead a desperate enterprise. Now I believed that my comparative inactivity—

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[1] I have tried without success to communicate with Mr. Mauchan; and trust that he will not object to what I say about him.

my refusal to join Admiral Liu outside and my general cautious attitude—irritated him ; to him I was missing glorious opportunities which he wished he had himself. He did not accuse me, but I sensed his contemptuous wonder. I think he believed that my compunctions were but a cloak to my timidity. So when with the arrival of the gunboat there was the opportunity to get a guard, and Mauchan said ‘ I propose we go ourselves to accept capitulation ; are you game to come ? ’ I acquiesced, and then entered wholeheartedly into what for me was a most improper business. We got a landing party of a dozen men and a Lieutenant, and with them we trotted off across the country in the appalling heat of August. And now it was a question of who would get there first, the army or the navy ; and that was why we ran. Yet we could not be sure that capitulation was really intended ; we might well be walking into a trap, but that was not the case. We won the race ; the Major at the fort was at the gate and welcomed us and took us in to tea, and as far as I know the word capitulation or the civil war was never mentioned. Half an hour later Tseng’s officers and men arrived, and then we left.

At the arsenal fighting still went on, and on the 19th August Tseng said to me : ‘ I am in a serious difficulty. Such and such a regiment has not had last month’s pay. It has now been offered by the Kuomintang, and the officers are considering the matter. If that regiment goes over it may be the beginning of a debacle in spite of our success so far. I know your funds are only for the navy, and I hardly dare to hope that somehow you could meet my needs.’ I thought the matter over. It would be quite useless to ask permission ; I could not get it, if at all, until too late. Tseng’s need was urgent ; the purpose of my fund might be defeated if I did not meet that need ; to do so would involve a misappropriation ; but I did not hesitate, and I gave Tseng a cheque for the equivalent of £10,000. At the end of the month when I finished with this job, was closing my accounts and sending in my statements, a very brief reason was given for this misappropriation. The banks made no comment ; some department in the Ministry of Finance wrote acrimoniously about it ; and from the Minister of Finance, Liang Shih-yi, I got a complimentary letter conveying the thanks of the Government for my services.[1]

It had been an interesting job. There is hardly a doubt that Stephen and I altered history for China, but whether for good or evil it is impossible to say. His immediate grasp of an unexpected emergency, the promptness of his action, the silence with which he did it—he hardly said a word to me—was quite remarkable. I always regretted that the part he played was not made public ; it was on my account that it could not be.

But it was not a pleasant job. That warning from the Kuomintang was twice repeated. My diary says : 'I went to see Colonel, now General, Bruce, the Captain Superintendent of the Police, about it. His opinion—stated very emphatically—was that the danger was serious and practically unguardable against ; that the chances for me were short odds.' It is a disagreeable feeling that a passing car may throw a bomb into yours ; and I did not like it a little bit. For the sake of my family I got the Government to insure my life, and they did so for £20,000.

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[1] 'Acting Minister of Finance, Liang Shih-yi, to Captain Tyler, Coast Inspector.

'The painstaking and capable way in which the Coast Inspector has managed the finances since the outbreak of trouble at Shanghai has earned the gratitude of Foreigners and Chinese alike. The Government have found him a great support and help. Peace has now been restored and order is gradually being maintained ; the Government recognize the zeal and ardour shown by the Coast Inspector, and the Acting Minister has decided to report at once to the President so that he may testify to his gratitude.'

XIII

SHANGHAI

In an earlier chapter I said that the history of Shanghai formed one of the backgrounds to my life in China. Here to begin with is a little picture of its origin :—

The Genesis of Shanghai was this wise : Long ago Duke Yü said to Wang, let there be land. And there was land ; for Wang built a great stone wall in the shallow waters of what is now called Hangchow Bay and connected it to dykes of mud and reeds on the sand banks. So he controlled the movement of the waters and bent nature to his will ; the tall reeds on the islands and the islets grew and spread, and the incoming and outgoing tides bringing their load of silt, dropped it among their roots—silt from the Himalayan plateau carried by the Yangtsze river. Thus islands formed and grew and merged one with the other, so that there were only creeks between. But still they covered at highwater springs, until seaward from the mainland there came farmers who dyked the creeks and sowed their crops in the rich fertile soil ; and these farmers bred and spread, and in the course of time made dry land of that great area which lay between the wall and where Chinkiang now stands. Thus was the sea changed to land, except for the Tahu lake which stays a remnant of the former state. And here and there, where rivers met, cities sprang up—Soochow, Shanghai, Hangchow and many others. All this was brought about by that great stone wall that, as legend has it, Wang built long before the siege of Troy.

The building of that wall was no small matter, for in the bay the water of the tide, as it flowed in, fell over itself and formed one long rushing travelling wave, which, when the sun and moon pulled together, had a height of nearly twenty feet and a speed of many miles an hour ; thus the wall had to stand the pressure of that swirling mass, and so its stones were dovetailed.

That, with a great wealth of detail, I gathered—by means of a translator—from a set of rare old Chinese volumes, *The Annals of Soochow*,[1] which at one time I possessed. It throws some light on how the Great Plain of China, formed by the Yellow river, grew until it reached its monstrous size. It throws some light on how the ancient Chinese valley-dwellers spread and bred on that highly fertile plain until their total in the plains and valleys reached four hundred million souls.

Now of those cities that sprang up in the plain that Wang made, Shanghai was comparatively unimportant. It was unimportant until the British Fleet sailed up the Yangtsze river to find a place of trade. That was in 1842.[2] And then commenced a curious piece of history, epochal in the future story of the world. For by that choice Shanghai was destined, in years still yet to come, to be the greatest port in all the world ; and to be a pivot on which world politics will move. It was not made. It grew. It was organic in itself and a sport at that—unique, like nothing else on earth.

In the early days of our intercourse with China we were greatly affected by the glamour of the empire. The Chinese were barbarians to us, of course (as we were to them), but what magnificent barbarians—if not in general, in some particulars. China was judged partly by the tales that Marco Polo told of the wonders of the Court at Kambulu ; and the story of the invasions by Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan was known better than it is to-day.[3]

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[1] Whether the Yü named in these Annals was the Great Yü may well be questioned. Dr. Morse, to whom this chapter has been referred, merely says : ‘ The Great Yü functioned over 4000 years ago (2280-2205 B.C.). The Hangchow bore was mentioned early in the fifth century B.C. An old sea wall was rebuilt A.D. 713. The present wall dates from A.D. 910.’

[2] I am, however, informed by Sir John Pratt that according to his researches the native trade of Shanghai at that date was very great, far greater than that of Canton, and with a tonnage comparable to that of the Port of London. This is a revolutionary piece of information for us who thought we knew something of our modern Chinese history.

[3] Regarding this Dr. Morse writes : ‘ China was judged less from Marco Polo (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries) than from the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses* of the Roman Catholic missionaries of the seventeenth

Some of our officials mistook the insolence of the mandarins for a mark of the greatness and the power that they represented. We could of course make war upon the country to secure a decent trade arrangement, and later to break down her diplomatic isolation—that lay quite clearly within the limits of the code—but it was an era of exactitude in conduct, and between war and no war there lay a gap of no alternative. And so we taught the Chinese, who hitherto had only known of force whichever way it worked—for them or against them—the idea of sovereign rights.

As an example of punctiliousness, of the compunction to do anything that was not strictly proper according to the code, consider the situation at Shanghai when in 1854, during the Taiping Rebellion, it was threatened with incursions by the Imperial troops, who were investing the City proper. It just happened that we were not at war with China at that moment. The settlement was in very real danger of being overrun by soldiers out of hand ; but its soil pertained to Chinese sovereignty ; how then could foreign troops be landed to protect our interests ? But of course this punctiliousness was of an academic nature, and of course a means of circumventing it was found by a legal fiction or—to use the modern language of the League of Nations—a formula. That formula is worth the reading ; it was laid down by Mr. Alcock, the British Consul,—with the French and American Consuls—at a meeting of Land Renters in 1854, which was assembled for the first time under a new Code of Municipal Regulations :—

‘ The necessity now pressing upon the community for the

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and eighteenth centuries, and G. L. Staunton and H. Ellis writing for the English public in 1793 and 1816. The two last were in particular much impressed by the high degree of civilisation of the Chinese. The British officials who were chiefly impressed by the power of the Chinese Empire and desired to treat it with great consideration were those in Downing Street. When one of the governing class (Lord Napier, Sir John Davis, Sir John Bowring, Sir Geo. Bonham, Lord Elgin, etc.) arrived in China he at once saw and wrote that nothing but armed force would obtain any concessions from the Chinese, and that two or three fifty-gun frigates would be enough.

‘ The supercargoes of the East India Company at Canton were in a difficult position. They objected strongly to submission to derogatory conditions which their directors in Leadenhall Street tended to require of them ; but having protested to the Company they carried out their orders loyally.’

immediate establishment of a Municipality in some form was to be traced to the impossibility, by any exercise of consular authority, of making permanent provision for the security of the settlement without a municipal constitution. And on this part of the subject he deemed it most important they should have a perfect, clear and correct knowledge of all the facts; and see the true bearing of the question at issue upon the position of the community, the naval forces and the civil authorities, both foreign and Chinese. To give that cosmopolite community legal status: an existence as a body capable of taking legal action *and of lending a legal sanction to measures required for their defence*, there must be some organization to take the form of a representative council with municipal powers and authority. The functions to be exercised on their behalf by such Council were no longer those of a Road and Jetty Committee, but involved the protection of life and property from causes of national disturbance in the country where they were located, from sources of disquiet and danger within and without the settlement, where a large native population bid fair to dispute possession with the foreigner for every rood of ground within the limits. And one of the first acts of such Municipality, or rather one of the first and greatest benefits naturally flowing from its creation, *would be the legalization of the many measures hitherto forced by a stern necessity upon the naval and civil authorities on the spot, but which could not be justified on any principle of legality.*'

The compunction in this matter existed not only with the Consuls. The British and American Admirals held the view that for them to take part in the protection of the settlement would constitute an act of war for which no authority existed. Thus Mr. Alcock further said :—

'Neither Great Britain nor the United States, nor France, had undertaken by Treaty to protect their subjects ashore in Chinese territory, nor could they, by Treaty, legally do so without the assent of the Chinese Government. As a matter of self-preservation, however, the Municipal Council could do these things.' And then came the legal fiction that the Council, having that right but not the power to exercise it, had 'every moral right to call in anybody and everybody to help it.' It was on those grounds that the navies took a hand.[1]

That happened in 1854, when the settlement had existed for twelve years. I propose to tell—very briefly—its story from the beginning, and I made that jump to the time of the Taiping Rebellion to indicate the medium, as it were, in which the organism of the settlement had its growth. It was a medium of official compunction as regards the means to meet the needs of the community. Consequently from an early date the residents learnt to rely upon themselves, to develop their governance as best they could by local arrangement with the Chinese mandarins; and in that endeavour the Consuls as a rule identified themselves with the community. It was the diplomats who, having made no provision in the treaty for the government of a settlement, opposed the growth of means to meet that lack.

The Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842. It opened Shanghai and other ports to foreign trade and provided that 'British subjects, with their families and establishments, shall be allowed to reside, for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or hindrance.' A supplementary treaty signed the next year made brief provision for the purchase or rent of ground and houses. There was no word in either of the treaties as to the conditions under which communities of foreigners were to live on Chinese soil. That I think was inevitable. No one could foresee what the conditions of those communities would be; over the situation hung the sanctity of sovereignty—that, in a peace condition, must never be impugned; and, in effect, the policy adopted was 'wait and see.' It must be remembered that even exterritoriality—freedom from Chinese jurisdiction—was not included in the Nanking Treaty, though the principle was already recognized. The Supplementary Treaty provided, however, that regulations to govern the communities should be drawn up jointly by the local Chinese officials and the British Consuls ; and it is important to note that no provision was made for submitting such regulations either to the British or the Chinese higher officials. I think that the framers of the treaty knew that the solution of the problem of the governance of the settlements must be the result of a gradual give and take and could not be—at all events at first—a subject for diplomatic action.

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[1] Seamen from the men-of-war may have been reluctantly used to protect the settlement before the utterance of Alcock's dictum, but I doubt it. The speech was made on the 11th January 1854, and the 'Battle of Muddy Flat'—the only considerable fighting that took place—occurred on the 3rd April following.

The first regulations—named Land Regulations—appeared in 1845. They defined the boundaries of the settlement, and made provision for the construction of roads and jetties, a Committee for the purpose being formed of ‘ three upright merchants ’ selected by the British Consul. All the power under the regulations was centred in the latter, even in respect of other foreign interests. That, of course, was an untenable position, and British jurisdiction over foreigners in general did not last for long.

The French had got their own settlement from the Chinese in 1849, but for many years the French Consul was its only occupant. The Americans did the opposite ; they acquired land and formed a colony in Hongkew in about 1848, and in 1861 organized a small police force of their own, but it was not until 1863 that an American settlement was formally arranged for ; and immediately afterwards its residents voted in favour of amalgamation with the English settlement, which then took place.

For the first ten years the conditions in the settlement were very primitive ; Chinese authorities exercised full control over all the Chinese there ; and there was no organized police force —either Chinese or foreign ; though the regulations laid down the right to hire watchmen.

We now come to 1854, to the time of the Taiping Rebellion, when Alcock made that speech of his. So far there had been no real municipality. There was the French settlement in which the French Consul lived in solitary glory, and which later had a history of its own ; there was Hongkew, where some

Americans resided but without a formal settlement ; and there was the British settlement in which the British Consul, assisted by the Committee of Roads and Jetties, reigned, except that other Consuls governed their own nationals. Within that settlement lived the whole community of whatever nationality, and so the anomaly of a British domination grew and led to difficulties, for example, about the use of ensigns other than the British. In consequence the British Government decided to give the settlement a status in which all had equal rights and in which the special functions of the British Consul should devolve on the Consuls as a whole.

In the details of this act the French and American Consuls —there were no others at the time—collaborated, and then were produced the Land Regulations of 1854. Now what about that speech of Alcock ? There is not a word in it to show the reasons for internationalizing that are named above. The reasons given are confined to that academic view of legalizing armed defence on China's soil. There may well have been a feeling of delicacy about referring, for example, to that matter of the flags and cognate things ; and the other reason gave a better chance for rhetoric ; but it was not eye-wash. It was obviously considered a very serious affair, that breach of China's sovereign rights in peace time, though it makes curious reading nowadays. And so the Shanghai municipality, carried in the womb of time for twenty years, was born. It was a curious birth, brought about unconsciously because it was ripe for happening, but consciously owing to the fact that the joint parents—the three Consuls—were alarmed at their responsibility in connection with the need for a breach of China's sovereign rights. So they hatched their baby and shifted their responsibility to it : they placed a crown upon its head and rendered it obeisance.[1] In later years the successors of these Consuls repudiated the offspring of their body ; they tore the crown from off his head and made him as subordinate as they could. But he never forgot the quasiroyal birth he had and always hankered for his sceptre; and being a lusty youth he fought for it and kicked against restraint and subordination.

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[1] But viewing this affair more historically and less picturesquely, one sees that there may well have been other factors in the situation ; and one can feel confident that the principle concerned stood no chance of being supported by the British Government for any length of time.

Inaugurated with that great dignity of language by Mr. Alcock the Municipal Council had to deal, when the Taiping Rebellion was ended, with the condition of Chinese sovereignty in the settlement. There were needs of government which the Chinese could not meet; there were Chinese official acts within the settlement that became beyond endurance; there was the crying need for an organized police; so partly by mutual agreement, partly by unnoticed evolution, and partly by some pressure, there arrived in due course effective self-government by the Municipality. It succeeded, for example, in suppressing the open functioning of the Chinese police within the settlement, and that was by means of pressure to which the Chinese yielded with reluctance. Dominating the situation was the fact—unexpressed and perhaps not even thought of—that, while there was antagonism between Chinese right and needs of the community on which the Council's acts were based, there was a very real community of interests between the two. What was good for the settlements was good for China; what was bad for China could not be good for the settlements. That unstated principle was the soil in which grew—step by step—the unique governance of Shanghai. It was a beneficent anomaly outside the scope of treaty stipulations. In the years to come the diplomats stood off and watched the strange growth of their abnormal and precocious ward and did not like it; they could not help materially because the thing was so illegal; they could not always interfere materially because what was done was so often obviously necessary. And even when in much later years an occasion arose where their interference was needed with great urgency it was not forthcoming: the power to do so had atrophied by lack of use.

In general that growth, so irregular but so efficient in its process, was very admirable—this gradual creation of a constitution by a Council formed of business men—with the Consuls in the offing. It is what I meant when in that sketch of its origin I said that Shanghai was organic in itself and a sport at that.

There is a curious feature about the history of the French settlement. It was formally included within the scope of the code of 1854, but after promulgation the French Minister repudiated that inclusion without making the fact public. Some ten years later, when that settlement began to be inhabited, its independence, as notified by its own set of municipal regulations, came as a great shock to the rest of the community.

There remains the question of the jurisdiction over the Chinese in the settlement in those early days. In that matter the British Consul from 1852 or earlier functioned specially. Acting magisterially in association with the Chinese officials—a Weiyuan doubtless sitting with him—he dealt with trivial offences ; while serious ones were sent to the City magistrate. Later, the American Consul—at least—took a share in these proceedings.

From 1854 to 1861 the Taiping rebels ravaged the country for many miles around, and the wretched peasants flocked to the settlements for refuge. At the end of '62, by which time a thirty-mile zone had been cleared of rebels, there were a million and a half of refugees, and a year later—at the fall of Soochow—these were joined by perhaps another quarter million. Then they began to dribble out, and more rapidly after Nanking fell in July '64, so that at the end of '65 the Chinese in the settlement were reduced to less than 150,000.

To meet the problems resulting from this monstrous influx a Defence Committee had been formed ; and, when the situation began to remedy in '62, it turned its mind to other things. It realized the arrival of a nodal spot in the history of the place. Obviously it was the moment to think of what had gone before and what the future might produce ; and to consider a new departure. So that Defence Committee of merchant princes put their heads together, and with the words of Alcock about the great importance of the Council still pleasantly within their memory, put forward the proposal that the settlement should have a Free City status—and so a magistracy of its own. It was a most natural ambition. Equally natural was Sir Frederick Bruce's condemnation of it. That Minister took occasion also to criticize the Council's policy in general—their disregard for the letter of the treaties ; for example, the encouragement which they had given to Chinese to live within the settlement, and the restrictions placed on the taxation of the Chinese population there by their officials.

And so the inevitable happened. In 1864, Sir Harry Parkes was British Consul. With a very virile personality he was the exponent of the strict observance of Chinese rights, more or less regardless of local expediency as viewed by the merchants ; and he, in negotiation with the local Chinese authorities, produced the Mixed Court system. In 1869 a new set of Land Regulations were issued by the foreign Ministers under which the fiction of 1854—that the authority for extraordinary action rested with the municipality—was discarded. A Court of Consuls was formed to whose jurisdiction the Council was now subjected ; and, in effect, there was a reversion to the principle of Consular guardianship of 1845.[1] But in spite of this curtailment of its powers and the disapproval of its aims and policy the Council continued a potent force, and went its way regardless to a great extent of the dicta of the diplomats.

It should be understood that in what goes before I am not contributing to history. I am merely trying to give a picture from a certain point of view; so I stress and exaggerate to some degree the fictional grandiosity of the Council's birth. Thus does the artist, unconsciously perhaps but rightly, depict the moon upon his canvas at twice its real size, and so, however obscure the reason may be, gives it its proper value in the picture.

For the next development in the story of the settlement it is necessary to turn to general Chinese history for a little while. The year '98 was pregnant with evil and misfortune. Four years before there had been the disastrous war with Japan, and now foreign aggression was at its height. The country was seething with discontent ; the mixture of anti-foreign and anti-dynastic fermentation was in progress, which two years later led to the Boxer movement. But other forces were in play : those of the desire for reform as opposed to revolution ; and Kang Yu-wei was the leader of that movement. Officials were in it, if they were not revolutionaries ; Chang Chi-tung, a great viceroy, became ardent in its cause ; and then Kwanghsü, the thirty-years-old Emperor, became inspired with the same idea and brought Kang Yu-wei to court. Kwanghsü had reigned since '89 when the Empress Dowager had relinquished the regency, though she remained a power behind the throne and something to be reckoned with. So when the Emperor's edicts for reform became extravagant, she emerged and intervened, and he knew that her purpose was to lock him up. So Kwanghsü appealed to Yuan Shih-kai, who then was Provincial Judge of Chili and in command of troops, to turn the tables on her and lock her up instead ; and a feature of the scheme was that the Viceroy Yunglu, a partisan of the Empress Dowager, should be summarily beheaded. Yuan is said to have betrayed the Emperor to Yunglu, but there is some doubt about the extent of that betrayal. Anyhow the Empress Dowager won the day, occupied the throne again, immured the Emperor in the Pavilion of Peaceful Longevity, and then started on the extermination of reformers. Dr. Morse in his *International Relations of the Chinese Empire* writes of decapitations at that time ; but I was told of gruesome things, for example, of a victim in a heavy coffin being sawn in two—and lengthwise.

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[1] This set of regulations was never submitted formally to the Chinese authorities for their consent. This, however, was not due to any lack of desire to do so, and still less to any disregard for China. It was due to certain cogent reasons which so far, I believe, have not been made public. There is ample evidence that these regulations were tacitly accepted by the Chinese authorities.

I will digress here to say something of the Emperor. I fail to understand why he should be handed down in history as a poor thing—a subject for contemptuous pity. He is said to have had an immature mind and to have been mentally anaemic. Yet the initiative in action for reform was his, however much he may have been guided by Kang Yu-wei. He issued some forty edicts on important matters in a hundred days ; and when his liberty was threatened he tried to take most daring counter measures. He was physically weak ; it is likely that the Empress Dowager encouraged him in habits that would make him so ; and yet in spite of it he made that strenuous effort to redeem his country. That he was unwise to rush things is obvious ; but so have others been without being branded for it as semi-idiots. That after his downfall he collapsed is not astonishing ; he was a victim waiting for his certain doom, which took so long to come, for it was ten years later that it overtook him, whatever were the means employed ; and in between, when the Empress was raging in her preparations to flee from her capital in the Boxer time, he had to look on while his beautiful Pearl concubine was thrown down the well that lay in front of the Pavilion of Peaceful Longevity. Kwanghsü made a noble, however unwise an effort, and he died a martyr to the cause of progress.

At the time of the Empress Dowager's *coup d'état* the Chinese officials at Shanghai had for long relinquished the right to make arrests within the settlement, though every now and then they did it just the same—but surreptitiously. But they had not lost their right of jurisdiction over their nationals who, without being permanent residents there, took refuge within its borders. These were handed over on request with a minimum of formality. As for the Chinese residents, the Mixed Court dealt with them except when the crime was beyond its competence to deal with, and then these also were handed over to the purely Chinese court.

The Empress Dowager was raking out the cities for reformers. The settlement, although not as yet a certain refuge, was safer than elsewhere, and reformers congregated there for such protection as it gave and for the means of going overseas if necessary ; and of course the Empress Dowager wished to rake the settlements as well. I have forgotten whether she succeeded in netting any victims before the Council, supported by the Consuls, took another step in the arrogation of Chinese legal rights. It refused to hand over a refugee except when a *prima facie* case was made out against him in the Mixed Court as a common criminal ; and political offenders they would not hand over in any circumstance. The act was more than merely justified ; there was nothing else to do ; to hand over reformers—worthy and patriotic men—to be killed and worse was quite impossible. The act served China well ; again was shown that principle of community of interests, however antagonistic rights might be. It was J. O. P. Bland, the Municipal Secretary at the time, now a publicist and the author of several books on China, who led in that affair of '98.

A few years rolled by ; the Boxers came and went ; Japan and Russia fought on Chinese soil ; the Manchu dynasty was ejected from the throne ; Yuan became President of China, and, with the blessings of the Western world, made himself more or less dictator, on which rebellion broke out against him. That was in 1913—the monarchical affair came later.

So from the time when the Right of Asylum was established in 1898 to the time of the first rebellion against Yuan was fifteen years. Bland, had he stayed, could have been counted on, knowing as he did the genesis of that measure of emergency, to guard against a gross misuse of it ; but he had left. Other people came and went : members of the Council, busy men of affairs ; members of the Chamber of Commerce ; members of the China Association—they would include a barrister perhaps, but all were busy. And the Consuls came and went—just ordinary men who happened to be consuls instead of something else and with no special brand of intelligence ; and they dealt with yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow ; fifteen years ago did not come within their purview.

A feature of Shanghai was its mutability ; a constant change of its constituent parts ; there was continuity of growth because it was a living and strongly healthy organism, and to some degree it had a corporate instinct like the instinct of a herd, but there was little continuity of thought about the process of that growth. So what with the outside interests of these people in business and play ; what with mere inertia and unintelligence ; and above all what with the working of the unexpressed practice of the Council that 'what they had they held,' the Right of Asylum continued to function not only when the purpose of it had expired but when the operation of it was inimical to every interest except that of common criminals. In ninety per cent. of cases *prima facie* evidence against a murderer and an eye-gouger—the latter a specialty in local crime—was impossible to get. Intimidation of witnesses alone prevented it—they too would have had their eyes gouged out. So Shanghai became a place where criminals fleeing from the process of the Chinese courts were immune from interference; the settlement was their headquarters. And from that to allowing stations where rebels were recruited to fight against the Central Government—that happened in the French settlement—was but one step more.

Here comes the curious thing. The detriment and evil of the situation was realized; it could not but be. But somehow in those fifteen years the Right of Asylum—its origin forgotten—had come to have the glamour of a sacred principle; it was as sacrosanct as a sacrament; and it took on a special British cloak of immutability as an example of our virtue in 'playing cricket' in all affairs of life—even to our detriment.[1]

By 1913 I had been in touch with settlement affairs for eighteen years. No one else had such a continuous official connection with the place. I had of course no official connection with the municipality, yet in one way and the other my business had brought me in close contact with Sino-foreign affairs; and in a limited way I had made a study of the growth of the Council's powers and policy. There came the second revolution and its suppression for a time; and Admiral Tseng, who now became Military Governor, was the leading Chinese spirit in trying to tidy up the situation and put down the extra brand of lawlessness which that revolution carried in its wake; and then of course he came up against the Right of Asylum. Tseng appealed to me about it—the unfairness of the thing, the obvious detriment to Chinese and foreigners alike, the folly of a procedure whose only function was the protection of the criminal ; and that was how I came into the matter.

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[1] A. M. Kotenev in *Shanghai: its Mixed Court and Council* quotes a proclamation to show that the Council took prompt action to prevent an abuse of the Right of Asylum. It did take certain steps when the scandal of the situation became outrageous; but even then they were quite inadequate.

The Inspectorate gave me leave to act—again that generosity of trust. With reluctance my chief even gave me leave to come out in the open, but I did not use it ; I always feared publicity and the jealousy and other things it caused ; so I kept behind the screen and tried to push others into the limelight. My object was to get some smart young barrister to take the matter up, to talk at a meeting of the ratepayers, to urge the China Association in the matter—to be a publicist in fact. Oppe promised me to do it, but the Great War was on, and he volunteered and was killed. Then I tried another who co-operated for a time, but later dropped the matter.[1] So I was left to do the best I could alone by talking privately to public men and writing to the papers.

Some time later Grant-Jones, the British Mixed Court Assessor, with whom I had not at that time discussed the question, started, and apparently on his own responsibility, a new procedure for handing over criminals, which went a long way towards what Tseng and I desired ; and I for one gave him great credit for his wisdom and pluck in breaking with tradition. Whether my agitation had any influence in that change I never knew.

In November 1915 came Tseng's murder. He was shot in the street in the International Settlement. The presumption at the time was that he had been killed by the Kuomintang, but even then there were whispers that Peking was responsible for the deed. He had been reticent with me about the monarchy affair, though he expressed to me his disapproval of what he knew to be a monstrous folly, and he showed grief because of his devotion to Yuan Shih-kai. After the tragedy I recognized the portents of his recent manner : he knew, I think, what was with certainty impending over him, and made no effort to avert it. But I am still in doubt as to who arranged for the killing of my friend.

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[1] I have the letters that I wrote him on the subject ; they may be useful later to one who writes the detailed history of the settlement.

My stricture on Shanghai covers a very brief period. Until the second revolution that mad obsession of the sanctity of asylum did no great harm except to the settlements themselves. The period of serious harmfulness was brief—was measured by a year or two. An obsession is a stubborn thing ; a cure is slow. There was a strong inertia against a change in practice, but it gave way before a slow recovery of sanity.

That folly of asylum favoured—quite unintentionally—the party that is now in power, and which more or less must stay so ; and thus it is not a card which can be used by it against Shanghai. But apart from that it cannot be put in the balance against the great benefits which the settlement has conferred on China. Putting that temporary error on one side, Shanghai has been a centre of stability, of sanity, of progress ; it has been an object-lesson of many things : of governance, of sanitation and, above all, of justice in legal procedure ; and it has been a refuge for the persecuted.[1]

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[1] I purposely abstain from any comment on the immediate and stupendously important problem of Shanghai. The subject is far too controversial for this book.

XIV

THE GREAT WAR

1. NEUTRALITY WORK

The Great War came. How very different was our position from those at home ; and I for one felt mean about it, so later I volunteered as a Naval Reserve Lieutenant-Commander and wondered if, in view of my previous war experience, I might get on an Admiral's staff. Admiral Limpus was a friend of mine, and Admiral Jellicoe knew something of me ; yet I knew that the probabilities were that, because of my age, out-of-dateness and my deafness, I should be made a Harbour Master at some wretched port ; but my application was refused. Sir John Jordan wrote that the Admiralty considered I was serving my country better where I was ; yet at the time I was acting as Neutrality Adviser to the Chinese Admiral, and the power most to be guarded against in that respect was Great Britain. It was a position that was anomalous and very delicate. On the 8th August Sir Francis Aglen had written that the Chinese Government wished me to act as Neutrality Adviser to the Chinese Admiral from behind the screen ; a decision was left to me, and nothing was said about the inevitable difficulties of the matter. So I went round to Sir Everard Fraser, the Consul-General, and asked him what he thought about it. I have no record of whether he already knew of the proposal, but either then or shortly after he told me that Sir John Jordan cordially concurred in it. Again not a word was said about the delicacy of the job—about what our mutual relationship might be.

The Admiral was still Li Ting-sing—more my friend and more reliable than any of the others I had dealt with. Within limits he would follow my advice. My duties in this matter of neutrality—in a strenuous form—lasted until July 1915, that is for nearly a year. I have a lot of papers, though not all, from that time—dossiers of episodes, my weekly letters to the Inspectorate, and others. They make sad reading. There were British, French and German gunboats on the Yangtsze which had to be interned. At the river ports the British Consuls and the Commanders of the vessels played the game; they acquiesced in disarmament as a necessary feature of the situation. The Germans were troublesome and, owing to Li's weakness, were not adequately dealt with. There was a mass of small worrying affairs to deal with, but all were handled on both sides with a sense of decency—all except one. That affair was not quite so small. . . . Here, reading proofs, I cut out quite a lot, for I find I broke a rule that I have imposed upon myself. That rule is this :—I criticise the living only in affairs that are integral to my story as a whole. I criticise the dead—as public characters—only when they are really dead and gone—for me. Some, though dead, have not entirely gone; their spirits linger in the memories of those who love them and who are my friends. And these I leave alone at whatever cost in points of interest.

In this affair of neutrality, and later, when China 'went to war,' I got, from time to time, to serious loggerheads with people of position and authority, most of whom were friends of mine. I knew quite well—I applied this to myself as well as others—how little we are reasonable creatures. We use reason—in the main—merely to bolster up our prejudices.

Sir John Jordan, visiting Shanghai, called at my office, and I told him of an incident that might form a danger to my reputation. In that charming way of his he answered, 'You are suffering like many others for the Cause; but be assured that we know you well, and that your reputation will stand a great deal more than that.'

There was one important way in which the Great War affected China that must be told. The Germans had the port of Kiaochao in China, and the Japanese attacked it, and, with an entire disregard for China, they landed near Chefoo and marched overland to take the Germans in their rear. They were our treaty allies, but to them the great issue was not whether we should win or lose, but how the war would react on their position in regard to China. If the allies won, what would not Russia, flushed with victory, do? She would eat up China in the North. There would be no concerted policy toward that country, and so, because of what Russia did, France would extend her southern colony and occupy Yunnan. Then Great Britain would have to take her share, and it would be the Yangtsze valley; and Japan would be left out in the cold. If, on the other hand, Germany won the war, she would dominate—sooner or later—the whole of Russia; and then where would Japan be, who had fought against her? As for America—whether she was drawn into the war or not—she was not likely to intervene with force on behalf of China. Thus there was a serious danger that in the inevitable after-turmoil of the war Japan would be swamped—unless . . . Unless what? Unless, of course, she took advantage of the preoccupation of the several states to consolidate herself in China, and so present a *fait accompli* when the war was over. It was some such view that I think our ally took about the situation.[1] So they flung their Twenty-one Demands at the head of Yuan Shih-kai, demands which claimed, in effect, suzerainty over China. They threw them secretly, with threats of drastic measures if they were divulged; and when there was leakage of them they denied them as long as it was possible to do so. But of course it all came out, there was some diplomatic intervention, a whittling down of the demands, and in the end a face-saving farce—an ultimatum and a giving in by China on points which did not matter very much.

2. CHINA AT WAR

In February 1917 America broke off diplomatic relations with the Central Powers, and it was plain that, with all the world lined up, it would be against China's interests to continue neutral. Thus there would be a new set of duties for the

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[1] This opinion is based on Putnam Weale's description of the time in his *Fight for the Republic*.

Chinese navy, and I got busy with the matter. I took the initiative in advising in this case; I was not asked to; but it had become a custom that I had the right to do so. So I wrote a memorandum for the Admiral setting forth the probable course of events: a breach of relations followed eventually—absurd as it might seem—by China declaring war against the Central Powers. Judging by what had happened elsewhere in the world it was certain that the captains of German steamers would have instructions to sink their vessels and cause as much inconvenience as they could in an enemy port; and they were likely to try to follow those instructions on a breach of relations. The Admiral must therefore be prepared, when he got instructions from Peking, to seize the vessels; and if the attempts at destruction were to be frustrated, the seizures must be made with skill.

Sir Francis Aglen was helpfully appreciative of what I did, kept me informed about the situation, gave me good advice and, in general, trusted my discretion.

I do not propose to give the details of this business—though I happen to have most of my dossiers about it—for it would take up too much space to do so. In between the main facts as I give them there was a continuous string of difficulties: there was resentment at the moral pressure I had to bring to bear to get things done; a special Admiral was detailed for the work, and a day or two before the crisis he left, and with no arrangements for continuity; there was opposition from influential Englishmen who considered I was alarmist in my view; and so on. But I pushed steadily ahead, and when things were ready I notified Sir Francis. Two days later—on the 14th March at five o'clock in the morning—an officer brought me a message from the Admiral that diplomatic relations would be broken off that day at noon. Now I had made up my mind that, if the opportunity occurred, the seizure should be effected some hours before the diplomatic breach; but I told no one of it—not even my chief. It was the sort of thing that would never have been sanctioned; the sort of thing to make no one else responsible for; it could only be justified by subsequent proof of fell intent. There was a factor of psychology in this decision. I felt certain that the German captains had instructions to sink their vessels ; equally I felt certain that those men —mild in their isolation and comparatively unaffected by the German crowd hypnosis—would not be keen about the doing of it. They would take steps to sink their ships at noon because they had to ; but if we seized some hours earlier there would be a good excuse for non-fulfilment of the orders. So when at half-past five that morning I saw the Admiral and his Captains, I advised that they effect the seizure at nine o'clock. The Senior Naval Officer—the American—and Sir Everard Fraser were informed at once of what was toward. The German Consul-General was to be informed at nine o'clock. Then I went down river in a motor boat to watch proceedings, without, of course, taking any part in them. It all went like clockwork and without a single regrettable occurrence.[1]

Here is an extract from a leader in the local paper :—

'It is now evident that an act of difficult executiveness was carried out by the Chinese navy with a degree of discipline and courtliness that would have done credit to the naval forces of any country. Six vessels were taken police charge of, in circumstances where a measure of belligerent action was unquestionably intended, without—as far as we know—a single case of any untoward incident. The action taken was prompt, swift and effective. The need for these qualities is evidenced by the fact that in three vessels out of six preparations had been made for their destruction and for the consequently serious injury to the harbour.

'Taken completely by surprise, the officers of the *Sikiang* were seen to throw their bombs overboard when the Chinese naval guard boarded. This vessel had her gangways hauled up and the boarding was effected by boarding ladders.

'On the *Deika Rickmers*, the Captain, having been warned by the officer of the guard of the advisableness of giving information if he had any explosives on board, decided after an interval of consideration to act on that warning, and he showed the officer four bombs in one of the engine cylinders, the cover of which was removed. Unquestionably from the nature of these bombs—which will be described presently—they were not intended to be used in the cylinder; that was merely their storing place.

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[1] The detailed instructions to the boarding officers, which may be of interest to some, are given in Appendix D.

'On the *Albenga* one bomb was found inside a boiler and another in the double bottom. This was subsequent to the crew's departure.

'We also understand that in each of these three cases the bombs were of identical pattern. They were rectangular tins containing about three pounds of dynamite fitted with a detonator and a length of Bickford fuse—a slow match that would burn for several minutes after ignition. Such a bomb would, we understand, blow a very considerable hole through a ship's bottom, or completely wreck a boiler or engines.

'The fact that these bombs were of the same pattern indicates that there was a concerted and organized official scheme to sink the vessels, which was only forestalled by the promptness of the Chinese naval action. We are prepared to believe, however, that individual captains would have been but unwilling agents in the matter.'

I did the examination of the bombs myself. There was one —a single one from a certain steamer—which was purposely not referred to in that leader. The pattern of the case was the same as the others; but it contained no dynamite. Instead it was filled with signal lights, whose only effect would be to make a smell. That captain was determined not to sink his ship; but there were his officers to consider, and later there might be the need to explain why his bomb had not exploded; and those burnt-out signal lights would evidence that the dynamite had been defective.

So that was that; we had set a good example of efficient action, and that in particular is what I wished to do.

Four months went by with no events worth mentioning. Then on the 14th August Sir Francis telegraphed 'Urgent. War with Germany Austria declared ten o'clock to-day.'

There had hitherto been no breach with Austria, and she had several liners in the harbour. On the 10th I had written to a new Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Yeo, then at Nanking, asking if, in what was coming, he wished for my advice. He did, and later had the Government instructions to be guided by it. So I had made my preparations and answered Sir Francis' telegram : 'Preparations for seizure of Austrian ships will be completed to-morrow.' The Austrians took it cheerfully, gave all assistance possible, and they had no bombs.

On the declaration of war an English-speaking official, Mr. Sah, was appointed Taoyin—the Chinese representative in the settlement—and at once got in touch with me ; so I had some hope of being able to guide the difficult policy that would be needed in the settlement. I had thought of it for long, as will be seen from the following letter to Sir Francis dated the 20th August :—

'When in April last war with Germany seemed imminent I was anxious regarding the development of the situation in respect to the authority that would be used within the settlement for extraordinary action.

'Would the settlement authorities realize that it was not the settlement that was at war but China, and that the only authority within the settlement for extraordinary action in connection with a condition of war must be China's ? I felt no considerable assurance on this point. . . .'

In view of these considerations I wrote a memorandum on the subject and salted it down. A copy of that memorandum is enclosed.[1]

Later there came a reaction against the state of war. The majority of Chinese officials were pro-German. They liked the way their vanity was pandered to ; they liked their birthdays to be remembered with a present ; above all, they liked the men who understood the etiquette of bribing and of the arrangement of commissions. So what with this and that, I dropped out of consultation with Mr. Sah.

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[1] See Appendix E, which is given as an example of the sort of thing I did.

Sir Everard Fraser knew, of course, that it was I who had been—behind the screen—responsible for what in neutrality affairs he had disapproved of; but that never affected our personal relationship. I think he had a sort of doubtful regard for me; and in spite of all, I had a very real regard for him; liking and approval are two very different things.

In my dealings with Mr. Sah I had Sir Everard's cordial approval, which pleased me very much in view of what had gone before; so I was tempted to try my hand at something else.

The settlement had originally been British; it was we ourselves who made it international. The Municipal Council had by Mr. Alcock's introduction in 1860 been given a status of great dignity; but, as already said, it was replaced by subordination to the Consuls. That change, by itself, might either be a benefit or a detriment; but, coupled with the fact of the growing number of Consuls in the place and that the Consul of Cuba had a vote equal in potency to that of the British Consul-General, it indicated an anomaly at least. In the meantime the Council remained predominantly British. Now came the war. The enemy Consuls went away; there were left belligerents and neutral, some of the latter pro-German, some not. The Consuls as a body thus became inoperative.

So here was the opportunity—now was the time—to deal with this question if a consideration of it pointed to a desirable change. Tentatively I viewed with favour a reversion to the Alcock principle: a curtailment of the power of the Consuls as a body; a re-institution of the original status of the Council with some provision to secure a greater efficiency in general policy than had been exercised before; and one object of this change would be to increase the British influence in the settlement, where British interests were so much greater than were those of Cuba.

Now I put this matter to Sir Everard; I put it privately, of course, tentatively and academically, as an idea that might be worth considering in view of the great future of the place, and the importance of the foundation of its governance, and the opportunity that was now presented. Again was exhibited a strong difference of judgment. He took my memorandum very seriously and expressed the strongest condemnation of it.

It was at the end of this year of 1917 that the French Government conferred on me the Gold Medal of Honour—‘ à vous marquer la reconnaissance du gouvernement français pour les éminents services que, depuis vingt ans que vous appartenez à l’administration des douanes chinoises, vous avez rendu à la Marine française, à la science et à l’humanité.’ The personal explanation was made that, had it not been for the crowded list for Legion of Honour consequent on the war, I would have been given that decoration. Such a very pleasant surprise ! The more so as I knew that I could never hope to get a British recognition.

I had asked, however, some time before, that, in view of my position as an administrative sailor in a foreign service, I be given suitable rank in the Naval Reserve for the use that I could make of it ; but the reply was that the regulations had no provision to meet my case.

XV

THE ADVISERSHIP

1. THE RIVER COMMISSION

The Yellow river is not the only one that flows across the Great Plain of China ; there are many others : the Hun-ho, for example. Now many centuries ago the Chinese river engineers with great skill but monstrous foolishness built a canal athwart the course of those minor rivers and partly blocked their egress to the sea. In the neighbourhood of Tientsin the only provision for the drainage of the country to the west of the canal was a passage which was barely big enough to carry the flood waters of the Hun-ho ; and if all the rivers were in spate at the same time a disastrous flood occurred which drowned or starved several hundred thousand country people ; and this happens septennially or so.

In 1916—or thereabouts—a flood of that kind occurred, and the country people to the westward of the canal, the elevated bed and dykes of which held back the waters, cut those dykes and flooded out Tientsin. So now the evil of the situation which had existed for so many centuries was brought home to foreign interests ; and they protested and agitated, and diplomatic representations were made upon the matter. And out of it all there evolved the idea of a Commission of all the interests concerned to deal with the evil ; but because of mutual jealousy there was to be, sitting jointly, one Committee of the Peking Government and another representative of foreign interests at Tientsin, the latter one being dominated by the local conservancy board—a treaty organization.

The Tientsin Commissioner at that time was Mr. F. W. Maze —now Inspector-General. In him I saw a man of exceptional ability—one who was an administrative engineer as opposed to the more common but highly valuable class of administrative engine-drivers, a man with a broad vision of what there was to do and how to do it. Before the flood occurred he had approached me about the formation of a Committee and about my being a member of it. There were several objections to my doing so: the anomaly of a sailor being on a board of engineers; the distance of Tientsin from my office at Shanghai; and others. On the other hand, there was my past association with the Yellow river, the opinions I had formed about it and the fact that the problem of the Hun-ho was linked with it. Above all, there was my keen interest in the problem; so I agreed that if I were invited, I would ask for the Inspectorate's permission to accept. Then came the flood and the Commission. I had expected to be a very humble person in this business, but when a preliminary meeting was held of all the members they made me Chairman of Committee in spite of my protests about my deafness; and I kept the chair until I left the country. I became, too, at once the leader of a policy to remedy the defect of the diplomatic scheme. There were Chinese monies—reserves held as security for the service of certain loans—over which the British and French legations had control. It was from those monies that the committees were to be financed; and to provide for honesty of administration the fund was to be in the hands of the Tientsin part of the Commission. It was obvious to me that that arrangement was fraught with evils for the future. What was needed was a single body, an organ of the Chinese Government, composed of the members of the two committees and supported by the aegis of the two legations. Such a body only could have potentialities for good; and for it such potentialities would be vast. I envisaged not merely the Hun-ho and Tientsin, but the Yellow river and the Great Plain in general. So I visited Peking to discuss the matter with Mr. Wilton, now Sir Ernest, in whose hands Sir John Jordan had placed the matter. I lunched with him—I think Archibald Rose was there—and I gave my reasons for the change I advocated. But lunch ended without a sign of appreciation of my point of view; and Wilton had an appointment, so I had to leave; but I was asked to come to tea to continue the discussion. I went away despondent; I believed that at tea-time I should get my *coup de grâce*; why, oh why, could not they see the obvious thing! I went back to tea prepared to make a final effort, and Wilton said: 'You need not argue any more,' and paused. Alas! Alas!—but then he went on to say, 'because you have quite convinced me that you are right. I have already seen Sir John, and you are to get your way. There is just one condition about the Treasurer. It must be Hussey-Freke—the Secretary of the Tientsin Conservancy Board.' So that was a good beginning; and Hsiung Hsi-lin, our President, was very pleased.

Let me tell about some of the Chinese personnel of that Chihli River Commission. There was Hsiung Hsi-lin—a Hanlin scholar[1] and a philanthropist. He had been Premier for a time, but now, though on the fringe of politics, he took no active part in them. He was Director-General of Flood Relief—an onerous position. Apart from that and our Commission, his chief interest lay in his huge orphanage, where famine- and flood-stricken children found a home. It was an extraordinarily up-to-date affair, of which I will give just one example. It had a money currency of its own and a bank. Children over twelve had cheque-books. If one of these needed, say, a pair of shoes, he was given a credit for their value on the bank, and then he cashed a cheque and visited the appropriate shop of the establishment and bought the thing he needed; and so they were trained in business affairs. Hsiung had a charming home in the Western Hills, where he entertained with simple hospitality. His wife was just a lady, and one of great capacity and character, who took a leading part in philanthropic and educational activities. Their two daughters were later sent abroad for education—I think to England. Hsiung gained my complete trust and devotion, and I like to think that the feeling was returned.

Then came Admiral Woo, who had fought in '94, and because of that time and my other services to the navy gave me a sort of distinguished consideration. He had been a Minister at some time and was a very courtly person, and at the same time a most jovial soul.

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[1] The highest Chinese literary degree.

I think next of little T. S. Wei, the Commission's chief secretary and Hsiung's right-hand man—so small and slender and frail, with hands like those of a little girl. And he had a brain that I think no Westerner could have. He could listen to a speech of half an hour's length and then translate it, and not only never miss a sentence but never fail—in the other language—to give the equivalent point and emphasis. He was a phenomenon ; and he had translated Dickens into Chinese.

Then there was Hollington Tong and Yang Pao-lin, and others, and for all of them I had a regard that grew into positive affection. About this there is something to be noted. If one likes a fellow countryman or a European or American, it is pleasant but not extraordinary ; there is a normality that this should happen now and then that usually prevents it being stamped as something very precious. But when a real friendship exists with one of a different race and culture, and it is found that in spite of that difference there is the same thought-language and mutual trust, the experience has a very special charm ; and if it is not only one but a bunch of them with whom one is associated, the charm, of course, is greatly magnified. That was my position ; and I suggest it is significant of what the Chinese are or may be. But of course there is—in general—a reverse side to the medal.

Every six weeks or so von Heidenstam, another member from Shanghai, and I would take the train to Tientsin, stay a week or so and then return to our duties at Shanghai. I have already mentioned von Heidenstam in connection with conservancy affairs at Shanghai. He was the most reasonable man in conference that I ever met.

And now I must tell the story, very briefly, of how I left the Customs Service ; of how I was offered and accepted the position of an Adviser to the Chinese Government. I had been offered the position some years before and declined it ; for then it held out no temptation for me. I was very happy and more than contented with my lot. I had the kind of life which suited me exactly, one which combined the safety of a steady job with what amounted to adventure ; I would not have exchanged positions with an Admiral. But now there was a difference in the situation. For one thing, the River Commission and the Yellow river problem pulled me strongly ; for another, the anomaly of my freak-like extra-Customs activities was beginning to react both on myself and the Inspectorate. The acceptance of an offered change seemed indicated ; and Sir Francis Aglen's recommendation that I accept it was put very nicely : it would round off my career.

So in 1918 I left the Customs, and though I was pleased at the thought of my new adventure, I left it and my associates with a deep regret. The one unmitigated pleasure in the situation was the knowledge that my friend Eldridge would take my place. I had been Coast Inspector for over twenty years and my age was fifty-four.

There was regret, too, at leaving our charming little country house, which we had designed ourselves ; and the garden with its fish-pond skew-spanned by a curious concrete bridge which I had built myself ; our pergola with its rambler roses ; the screen of bambusa gigantica ; and the Japanese garden where every little shrub was petted.

So the family—we had now three girls, the youngest four—migrated to Peking ; and Bisbee's dying wish came true.[1]

2. PEKING DUTIES

Peking the mysterious ; in some details very ugly ; in its mass so beautiful ; such a sharpness in its silhouettes, such a richness in its colours, due to that clear northern air ; the yellow of the palace roofs shining in the sun ; and many of the curly roofs with funny little figures on the eaves and ridges ; crimson gates and crimson wooden outer columns of the houses; and general magnificence in such a palace as housed the British Minister.

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[1] Page 136.

We took a very modest house—for Peking. It and its many courtyards covered half an acre ; a series of separate bungalows —there were five of them—joined more or less by covered passages ; the biggest was our drawing-room with no ceiling, its massive wooden beams exposed. Mostly the windows were of paper. It took sixteen tons of coal a month to warm that house in winter—it was carried in by camels.

And now about my post. It was the Ministry of Communications that wanted me. Nominally they wished me to frame a Merchant Shipping Act—a tidy little job ; actually, as I later found, they did not care tuppence about that detail. What they wanted was that I should show a way by which, in the control of Chinese shipping, the Customs Service could be ousted.

The salary I claimed for giving up the Coast Inspectorship was higher than there was any precedent for giving an Adviser ; so my friend the Minister of the Navy came to the rescue and made me Adviser to that Ministry as well, and it was understood that mostly it would be a sinecure ; lastly, there was a clause in my agreement making up the balance by an allowance of several hundred pounds a year for axle-grease—an archaic synonym for travelling expenses.

So I was launched ; and then began a busy, a strenuous and a most interesting time. Twice a week I went the ninety miles to Tientsin to attend on Chihli river work. The other days I went to my specially built Shipping Law Office at the Ministry of Communications. Now and then I was given a special job ; for example, a claim by a foreigner against the Government would be referred to me ; and I would investigate and see the foreign Minister concerned and get the matter settled out of hand. My previous experience in shipping arbitration came in useful here. Of the River Commission at Tientsin I have not much to say, because to give even a minor picture of it would take several chapters. We were a happy, laughing, quarrelling lot of several nationalities : some Chinese, an Italian, a Dutchman, a Swede and myself, an Englishman. Apart from language there were different modes of thought to deal with. The

Italian said, ' Mr Chairman, I demand an answer to my question ' ; but he only meant that he requested it. On the staff was an American engineer, as charming in his manners as he was capable in his work. At one time we had as Engineer-in-Chief a Greek. Now in our departmental correspondence we had dropped all honorifics and used simple memorandum forms. I wrote such a memorandum to the Greek soon after his appointment, and he returned it in the chit book as unbecoming to his dignity to receive—and he resigned. There was an affair that makes me very sad to think of. The Dutchman was a charming fellow, and I was very fond of him ; but he became obstructive, so obstructive that eventually I considered it my duty to recommend his removal from the Commission. Later he had the opportunity to put a spoke in my wheel ; I understood he took it, and I do not blame him. I was possibly too strenuous with him, and I have a feeling of remorse about it.

Eventually we decided to get the best river engineer the world could give us, whatever he might cost. The Mississippi with a physical regime somewhat similar to that of the Yellow river pointed to America for such a man ; but I knew no means by which we could assure a satisfactory selection, and I feared a commitment that might lead to diplomatic trouble. So we turned to India and got the services of Mr. Rose, the retiring head of the Public Works Department there, and, when I left China, he also took over my duties as Chairman.

In my Peking office my nose was buried in a mass of tomes on Shipping Law. As Coast Inspector I had already controlled the safety side of shipping and the details of tonnage measurement ; but now came, for example, such a matter as the Limitation of Liability in accidents—which of course ought to be uniform throughout the world, but is not. In this and other matters I had to study what was done in other countries—a fatiguing operation calling for the closest concentration, but because I was interested it was not altogether dull.

The Ministry of Communications cared only for the ousting of the Customs from the control of shipping. I think now that they assumed I was intelligent enough to know their meaning without being told ; but I was not. I assumed they wanted a practicable scheme ; no such scheme was practicable without a preparatory period of mutual co-operation between the Customs and the Ministry, and that they vigorously objected to. Wang Tsung-wei, the Judge in charge of Law Revision, and a man of great capacity, tried to put me straight —to impress upon me that whether I was right or wrong, whether a scheme was practicable or not, the Ministry was determined to run the Customs out from the control of shipping.

Now came another complication. A bureaucratic control of shipping would mean innumerable posts, and so the Ministry of the Navy claimed it was they and not Communications who should run it ; and they expected my support. And when I would not give it they impeached me for incompetence, and I was a member of the commission that was formed to investigate the matter, and which vindicated me. I believe that the instigator of that business was the officer who at Weihaiwei in '94 had been insubordinate and who had publicly apologized instead of having his head cut off. Yet the Minister of the Navy was undoubtedly my friend, which shows of course how much a Minister is in the hands of his departmental heads.

There at Peking I had a still wider scope for my faculty of interference in general affairs. I learnt something of how the several legations viewed or did not view the situation, and how little they were doing or could do about it owing to mutual jealousies. China was becoming more and more disgruntled. She did not know enough to know what were her real grievances, and worried imaginary ones to death. Japan was steadily intriguing, as was natural, fomenting trouble from the South and getting Chinese statesmen in her clutches. In the absence of some Western statesmanship there seemed a danger of China becoming inoculated, against her will, by the Pan-Asiatic virus of Japan ; and thus the seed of future serious danger for the Western world. So I wrote an anonymous propaganda pamphlet ' China, Japan, and the Peace of the

World,' and provided that statesmen in America, France and England should read it. But it soon was out of date, for I had not foreseen the danger of Bolshevism.

Already in 1918 the British Intelligence Department had feared the effect of Bolshevism in China. I was spoken to about it. I did not believe in it. The soil of Bolshevism was a state of chaos, and China, whatever appearances might be, was the least liable to real chaos of any country in the world. Effective government of sorts went on—regardless of the absence of a central government—by means of that peculiar automatism provided by the precepts of the ancient sages. I was only partly wrong.

In 1919 there happened a very curious political affair, concerning which I was the only Westerner who knew something of its ins and outs ; and I think it was because of that that my box of archives was ransacked, and the dossier of the episode, my propaganda pamphlets, some diaries and other papers stolen.

A portion of the Amur river forms the boundary between Russia and Manchuria, but its lower part runs in Russian territory. By a Russo-Chinese treaty of many years before, China had the right to send her merchant vessels up the river from the sea and to be in joint control of the river where it forms the boundary. There had, however, been no attempt to exercise that right, and unquestionably Russia, with her ambitions about Manchuria and her practical possession of its northern part, had later no intention that China should. But now, with the weakening of Russia from the war and revolution, Peking thought the time had come to act. Before I left the Customs Sir Francis Aglen passed on to me a suggestion from the Government that we send a Customs cruiser to earmark China's right ; but I explained that the navigation of the Russian section was, by implication in the treaty, obviously restricted to Chinese merchant vessels, and I heard no more about the matter then. But when I was Adviser it was decided that there should be a Russo-Chinese meeting at Harbin to draw up a convention about the control of the jointly owned section of the river; and I was appointed as a delegate to it. A day or two before we left Peking I got some news that made my hair stand up on end. The Ministry of the Navy, acting in conjunction with the Foreign Office, was sending a flotilla of gunboats to Nikolaievsk to ascend the river. They thought they had the right to do so; the question did not come within the reference of the impending conference; so they thought it would be good policy to exercise it. But quite clearly that right did not belong to China, and, even had the matter been in doubt, the method was bound to kill the projected conference. So I visited the Foreign Office and told them of the facts; the expedition could end in nothing but disgrace; and I handed in my view in writing. The effect of what I said I could not tell; I could only hope that they might realize their utter foolishness before it was too late.

I reached Harbin about the 12th October 1919. There were no signs of Russian delegates; let it be said at once that there never was a sign of them. But to my astonishment I found there a Chinese Admiral of the Amur river, whose name was Wang. From time to time—I stayed three weeks at Harbin—he told me of the movement of that expedition. I wish I could give the details of that story—how Russia set the trap and baited it; but I have only my memory to trust to plus a few notes I still possess. The trap was baited with plaintive remonstrance about the object of the expedition so as to simulate regretted weakness; and the object of the trap was to make China so lose face about the Amur river that she would drop the rights she had upon it. But partly, perhaps, it was a joke by the Vladivostok military authorities—they would stage a booby-trap for China so as to have a cause to laugh at her discomfiture. On Russia's side there was, at the time, a muddle of conflicting authorities—at Vladivostok there were both Whites and Reds; at Peking the Legation had the old Imperial staff.

I am not sure what part Japan took in this affair; but for once her wishes and Russia's marched together. Neither wanted China on the Amur; Japan because she aimed at getting there herself some time in the future. Perhaps Japan took no active part in this burlesque ; it may be she just looked on as at an entertainment.

On the 15th October I heard that the officer in charge of the flotilla on arrival at Vladivostok had been warned that he had no right to navigate the Russian Amur ; but the nature of that warning only added to his hopes of carrying out his mission ; and he proceeded up the coast.

It was now that I felt sure a trap was set, so I telegraphed to my Ministry asking it to pass on to the Cabinet a message from me that the expedition, if not recalled by a telegram to Nikolaievsk, must be involved either in humiliation or disaster. I had no right at that time to address the Cabinet and I did not expect to get an answer, but I did : a polite reply that gave no information. The next I heard was of the arrival of the boats at Nikolaievsk. They had been refused pilots in the complicated narrows between Saghalien and the mainland, but had managed quite skilfully to do without them. A Japanese cruiser had shadowed them on the way ; and I supposed at the time that the Japanese were playing a double game, urging the Chinese on to their discomfiture and advising the Russians to resist them in due course. When the flotilla reached Nikolaievsk it was well received, and I believe the officers were entertained; and again they were told they must not go up the river. The Chinese Commanders, however, had no discretion in the matter; they had been ordered to go, and go they must unless actively resisted; and with winter coming on there was no time to lose. So at night time they left the harbour and steamed up the river, and that the prevention of their departure was deliberately withheld there cannot be a doubt.

And now I heard that a Russian General with troops and field-guns had entrained at Vladivostok for Khabarovsk, at the upper end of the Russian Amur, and somewhere in that neighbourhood they waited for the Chinese vessels.

That steaming up the river would be a great adventure to the Chinese Captains. They had defied great Russia and seemingly had gained their point ; they would be chock-a-block with pride, and hope, and satisfaction. They had steamed five hundred miles, and in a few hours' time would reach Manchuria and gain complete success. But it was not to be. Suddenly they were fired on ; and inspired by the pride of their hitherto success and the nearness of their goal, they went to general quarters and fired back. The details of that fight I never heard. I believe those gunboats were the modern ones —like little battleships with armoured decks—which would take a lot of sinking by field-guns ; but those guns on shore were mobile and could travel faster than the boats, which had the stream against them, and moreover they could hide, while the vessels were always in the open. There were casualties on either side, but I never heard how many. I believe those boats put up quite a gallant little fight, but in the end they gave it up ; the trap had closed upon them. So they crawled back to Nikolaievsk ; and then the river froze, and they had to stay there all the winter.

So far as I know no diplomatic word was said about the matter. The Chinese Government's sole concern was to hush it up. To me the Russian Legation shrugged its shoulders and regretted the affair ; it was Vladivostok that had acted, and it was independent of control.

3. CHINESE POLITICS

It was shortly after that affair of the Amur river that Admiral Sah became Acting Premier. We wiped out what had gone before, and got together on the subject of a naval fund—a pet scheme of mine.

That there would be a period of civil war ahead was as certain as anything could be. To the navy the idea of being used as a pawn in the ambition of military leaders was repugnant ; still more repugnant was the possibility of it being divided against itself—of one part fighting against another. In a civil war the navy in one way or the other—for example, defending transport of troops by sea or commanding the Yangtsze river—could control fifty per cent. of the situation.

That it should become a political factor to that extent was highly undesirable. And dominating the situation was the matter of pay, the pay to provide for the parents, wives and children of the men, respectable family men—not riff-raff like the soldiers. If a central government was bankrupt owing to the secession from it of the provinces, the navy must in due course be tempted beyond the possibility of resistance to go over to the side that had the money.

There was a fermentation process going on in China which must continue for some years to come. Chief among its elements were the military satraps and their armies. In that process the navy was not a necessary factor; its use as an ingredient could but increase the severity and the length of the period of strife; above all, it would destroy that morale of a nucleus for purely national defence which it had to a considerable degree, and the importance of which I had always urged upon the Admirals.

Yet there was no conceivable way by which the navy could be eliminated as a factor; but while that was so, there was a choice of evils. The lesser one was to adopt the principle that although the navy must never act against the central government, it would rest—though of course it would never be so stated—with the Admirals in consultation with the Captains to decide when a central government was unsupportable; and then stand neutral—a grave enough evil that, but much smaller than the alternative.

To make that scheme possible an arrangement would have to be come to with the Loan Banks whereby in critical times money, held by them on behalf of the Chinese Government, should be available for the payment of the fleet. That was the plan I advocated. Sir John Jordan approved and sympathized, but, with his term of office drawing to a close, he could not undertake to push it. It was over my vain efforts in this affair that Admiral Sah and I renewed our former friendship and that he made his generous friendly gesture of appointing me Honorary Adviser to the Cabinet. It was doubtless intended merely as a compliment; and anyhow I never had the chance to exercise the functions.

Here is the translation which accompanied the Chinese document :—

'To ADVISER TYLER,

'The business of the Cabinet is very abundant and all of it requires proper attention. As you are well conversant with matters foreign as well as those Chinese, and your knowledge and views are broad and wide, you are appointed as an Honorary Adviser of the Cabinet by this letter.

'We earnestly request that you will come round to the Cabinet from time to time and give your advice as freely as you can. SEAL OF THE CABINET.'

There is a subject about which something must be said. All of us—diplomats, bankers, merchants and the rest—backed the wrong horses. We pinned our faith in Yuan Shih-kai, and he proved a broken reed ; and after him we continued to back the North against the South—the remnant of old-time officialdom and governance against the seemingly futile vagariousness of Sun Yat-sen. Yet it was the South that ultimately won. Does that show that our judgment was defective—that we lacked in perspicacity ? I do not think so. In effect we had no choice. To the diplomat the nominally *de facto* government, to which he was accredited, was something which he could not go behind, and to all of us evolution was a more proper thing to back than revolution. We had no illusions about the virtue of the North ; but at least it was something tangible, while the South was like a dream to deal with. Yet that reality of the North has disappeared for ever, and it is the dream that has materialized.

We, who know a little but not much of China, are astonished at what has happened, but only with the astonishment that one accords the conjuror on the stage ; for China is the prestidigitator among the nations. Situations arise from which seemingly there can be no escape ; but the spirit of the Chinese people waves a wand, and hey ! presto ! the whole affair is changed to something else. Here is a little picture of that sort of thing :—

The Boxers are besieging the Legations, and in the near-by palace the Empress Dowager is signing an edict instructing her viceroys to kill all foreigners on sight.

A few weeks later foreign troops are at one entrance to her capital while she is fleeing through another to the Western Hills.

Some months pass by, and we see the Empress re-entering her capital in state ; and then she has the wives of diplomats to tea, and receives their adulation. If that could happen, how can one say what is impossible in China ?

The victory of the Southerners has cleared the board to a great extent. The new Chinese are left untrammelled except by their own defects ; but those are ample to provide for lots of trouble for some years to come, and it is just as well that that is so. A suddenly regenerated China would be a serious nuisance to the world and a misfortune as regards herself. She is a giant in parturition. It is well that the process should be long and even painful ; it is nature's method for securing an appreciation of the value of the result.

Already the prospective mother is claiming recognition for the offspring in her womb—recognition on terms of full equality. When it is born it will get that recognition.

Our previous backing of the North did not involve the support of one set of conceptions against another. We merely backed the people who could get the day's work done. And so it is to-day. We deal with the ganglion of interests centred at Nanking—which at this moment[1] controls no more than a very few of the eighteen provinces—because it is the only nucleus of some measure of concerted action. Now, as before, there is no choice about the matter. We do not know as yet what China, as an entity, really means nor what it really wants. There is Nationalism, of course, the desire to be untrammelled by extraordinary restrictions ; that is something real which has come to stay. Apart from that, we have no knowledge that what Nanking stands for is representative of China. There is nothing for it but to wait and see. But between that degree of conforming to events and a vast commitment for the future, based on faith in the continuance of a momentary stability,

[1] *i.e.* March 1929.

there lies a monstrous difference. Such a faith cannot be justified, and action based on it may be disastrous.

The question of the change in contact between the East and West and the problem of the treaty ports are highly controversial matters, and, as they cannot be touched on briefly, they are unsuitable to be dealt with here.

Then there is the academic but yet practically important question of the more distant future of the Chinese people. About that can anything be said ? Very little ; not more than that, running through the weft and warp of the infinite happenings that form the fabric of the future and seem to us fortuitous, there runs the thread of inevitability that China in due course —perhaps a century hence—will be a super-power of confederated states living side by side—and not as a Yellow Peril—with that other super-power, the English-speaking peoples ; (and a third may be the Slavs coalescing with a German matrix).

4. THE BARCELONA CONFERENCE

One day, working at my Peking office on my usual problems, I found I could not concentrate, and there was a dull pain at the back of my head. There had been no leading up to it ; I had been quite well the day before. It affected my work only—nothing else ; but my doctor took a very serious view of it, ordered me to stop all work and go home at once on six months' leave. That was in May 1920. As soon as I had left Peking the complaint fell off me like a cloak and passed completely out of mind—yet it was really the beginning of the end for me.

After three months at home I started back again—alone—via New York, and eager for my job. But at that city I received a cable from the Ministry, asking would I act as technical delegate to a sub-meeting of the League of Nations, which was to be held at Barcelona in the following spring to deal with the matter of Transit and Communications, left over from the Versailles Treaty ; if so, I should return to England and work up the subject. It chiefly concerned, as I later found, access to the sea by inland states. I ought not to have accepted it, but of course I did; I should have realized I had already strained myself and have fought shy of new adventures; but I did not give that view of things a thought. Instead—apart from the Barcelona business—I saw another chance to occupy myself. While in England I had tried to see Sir Leslie Scott, the expert on Maritime Law, to get his view about Limitation of Liability for Chinese shipping; but I failed. Now, I thought I would have a shot at American authorities. So I visited a friend at Providence, told him what I wanted, and asked if he could help me. ‘ Why, that ought to be quite easy. The Judge here is a friend of mine. I ’ll take you round to see him at the Court.’

As a result of that visit, where the Judge was very kind and helpful, I got half a dozen introductions to judges and lawyers at New York and Washington, and at the former I did as I was told. I got Judge Hough on the telephone, and said I had an introduction from Judge so-and-so; and his answer was ‘ Come round right now; I shall be very pleased to see you.’

There now occurred a curious little incident. When I saw the name-plate on the door of the Judge’s chambers I wondered whether he pronounced that name as we do; so I stopped a passing man who looked like a lawyer and told him of my doubt. To my astonishment he showed an air of strong resentment—‘ Who put you up to asking me that question? ’—and, when I had satisfied him that I had no bad intention, he said, ‘ Well, I guess I ’ve got to believe you; but really it is some coincidence. You see, yesterday I came along as you are doing to call upon the Judge; I too had a doubt about how he called himself; I too stopped and asked a man right here the question that you asked me, and the damn fool said, “ Why, it ’s an English name, he comes from Boston, and he calls it Haff ”; but when I saw the Judge and called him by that name he showed annoyance and told me it was Huff. And now the story has got around, and everywhere I go I am ragged about it; so is it a wonder that I thought you had been put up to getting one on me? ’

I saw the Judge and he was charming. ‘ Your aim has my highest commendation. The diversity of law on Limitation of

Liability, when quite obviously it should be universal, is a scandal. China, with her clean slate, has an opportunity which no other country has. Get her to adopt a wise mean in this affair, and the result may be epochal—the world may follow you. I 'll call a meeting of the Maritime Law Association at once to consider the matter.' It was a glorious opportunity; and it is among the saddest of my thoughts that I never had the chance to use it.

So I returned to England and started studying the two conventions which had been framed at Versailles and, because of the complication of the subject, had been left to another time. They were nightmares of presentation and of unintelligibility, and one was contradictory of the other. I told the chief of another delegation that if I were encouraged I would codify the thing so that as far as possible its meaning would be clear. But to this the experienced man replied, 'For God's sake do nothing of the sort. It is most important that a convention be agreed upon. From the nature of the subject and the situation, if we know exactly what it means, there won't be a dog's chance of it going through. The one chance for it is that each delegation hopes that the wording can be held to include their needs without being certain of it.' That is what is meant by a formula.

The Chinese delegation met at Paris for a month's study before the Barcelona meeting. And now I met Tsangou, the Chief Delegate. He was French educated and had absorbed French characteristics in a caricatural form. He was vastly voluble, curiously emphatically pointless, and very excitable. I think he had had experience of the League before; the chicaneries of the business were like good wine to him—he loved it; obviously he was very clever; equally obviously he was appallingly ignorant on matters concerning the interests of China which would come before the meeting. And that of course is where I came in. My instructions from the Ministry were to report direct should I think it necessary—a delicate authority, which I had no intention of acting on except for urgent reasons.

Tsangou and I were at loggerheads at once. I considered he was playing into the hands of the Japanese; I feared his attitude in that connection; and eventually I told him of my right and threatened to exercise it. Of course it was wildly indiscreet from the standpoint of my interests; but I had never exercised discretion of that kind. Always I had done the job that lay in front of me without regard to praise or blame.

The Barcelona meeting! Those men of world-wide reputation! Their speeches almost indicated the millennium in their tone; and yet I knew quite well—I had it on the best of evidence—that there was hardly one who would give up five per cent. of the interests he represented for an advantage to the world at large of ninety-five per cent. That word-juggling in the formulae! The use of language to bewilder and deceive, with a special brand of expert on the job—highly paid and greatly valued for their skill; and I wondered whether they were not manufacturing trouble for the future. The bare truth about a question—unadorned, uncamouflaged—would be viewed as an exposure that was quite indecent. I said to a member of another delegation that Barcelona was no place for a simple-minded sailor man, and he replied, 'Nor for any honest man.'

Yet in spite of these strong strictures I know quite well that we cannot do without the League. It is rather like religion in the genuine need for it and in the mixture of good and evil that permeates it.

The delegates were invited to Madrid to see the King and Queen—in that palace that Napoleon said was the finest in the world; and the halberdiers thumped their staves upon the floor in salutation. We stood up in a row, and the King and Queen and the Queen Mother passed down the line to receive the presentations, and here and there they stopped to have a talk. Among the group of Chinese my wife and I would be conspicuous, so the King talked to me for a quarter of an hour or so about China and the war of '94, and he made me do the talking; then came the Queen—and here a very sad affair—it was plain she was embarrassed by not knowing who I was among that group and did not like to ask. I felt so sorry for being the cause of that pretty Queen being bored while the King was talking to my wife ; I ought to have broken through convention to help her, but I failed to do so ; and after her the Queen Mother, who chatted as easily and pleasantly as any other hostess at a party.

At Barcelona the work went on. Although I criticize the methods of the League it was most interesting to see what they did and how they did it and what they did not do, and the relations between the delegations. I thoroughly enjoyed my work ; I never felt more fit or more certain of myself. Tsan-gou's mixture of antagonism and appreciation of my value was but an added spice to this new experience.

Then one morning when I had started work I found that I really could not stand the tap-tap-tap of my stenographer, which in all those years had never troubled me and which had not troubled me the day before ; and very soon the fact was forced on me that I was badly punctured—that the virtue had gone out of me.

Mine was essentially a one-man job, requiring the fullest vigour to keep it going ; and the long period needed for being pumped up again—it took four years—was not available. My career was ended, and thus, also, is my story.

APPENDIX A

(*See page* 98)

THE CHINA EDUCATIONALIST; AND THE CHIHLI RIVER COMMISSION

THE British Parliament had decided that the Boxer Indemnity should in future be used for the mutual benefit of China and Great Britain. From the date of that decision to 1925 the sum concerned amounted to some eleven million sterling; and then the matter of its allocation was ripening for decision. In a letter to the *Morning Post*, I had urged that a portion of it be used for Flood preventive measures. In the meantime Hsiung Hsi-lin, the President of the Chihli River Commission, sent Mr. Hussey-Freke to England to press the same proposal. As a result, a meeting in London was arranged for at which Dr. Scott, formerly of the Board of Education, was to present the claim for education and Mr. Hussey-Freke for Flood Prevention; but the latter, very generously, gave up this right to me.

The following are extracts from my speech on that occasion:—

. . . Consider now what is at issue. The educationalist claims not merely a large grant from the indemnity. A large grant, probably not less than £5,000,000, I assume that they will get. And that large grant they will get, I will not say independently of the intrinsic merits of their case, but certainly not merely on those intrinsic merits. They will obtain it largely by reason of the monstrously strong influence which they can bring to bear. Their claim, however, goes much further than this, and, in effect, is that no part of the indemnity which is possibly available for education should be devoted to flood preventive purposes.

To make good that claim they ought to be able to prove not only the importance of education—which is easy enough for them; not only the comparative unimportance of conservancy works—which I am sure they cannot do; to make good their claim they ought to be able to prove that conservancy work was glaringly unimportant compared with education, and that, undoubtedly, is beyond the limits even of their great capacity. On the other side, which is my side, is a request for the use—temporarily only—of about a third of the indemnity, leaving two-thirds for education and 'other purposes.' There is nothing of the nature of rivalry on our side in this. We ask for the loan for the amelioration of conditions due to floods, which cause in, say, each decade the death of not less than a million lives and inflicts the most appalling misery and suffering on tens of millions. Realize that a single debacle—and they occur on the average every seven years—may cause a greater loss of life than that which was suffered by Great Britain in the Great War.

But—and please note this fact carefully—money used, temporarily only, for this purpose, will also have an educational effect of a kind which on the one hand is most urgently needed by China, and which on the other hand schools, colleges and universities cannot provide. How this is so I will now as briefly as possible explain.

The Chihli River Commission—about which more will be said later—is the organization in whose hands the grant, if given, will be placed. It has prepared the way for a great scheme by making the necessary surveys and by the elaboration of plans ; but is without funds for their execution. This organization has on its staff about 12 engineers, 100 surveyors, 100 draughtsmen, 40 clerical staff ; and under the five years' scheme of work proposed this staff will have to be considerably increased. These men are being trained technically. They are being trained in leadership ; in the exercise of independent judgment and in the bearing of responsibility ; and perhaps above all, by being units in an absolutely honest administration. Professional self-respect, so hard for them to get elsewhere, is being acquired. It would take too long to explain in detail why this kind of training has so high a value in China. I will only say that no other organization provides it of the same quality and in the same quantity.

The training so given is supplementary to that given by colleges, and it is a supplement which from the true educational point of view is very much needed by China. Of the men trained by the Chihli River Commission the great majority who make good will have found their life work. Of men prepared by colleges, for technical occupations, how many and which of them follow that occupation ? It is the general experience of those who like myself have been in touch with the practical results of academic education, that the best men drop their technicality and follow other lines of life which offer better chances to them, and that it is the comparatively inefficient who continue in the careers for which they were trained. I am referring here only to occupations which involve hard physical work such as that of an engineer. It is this condition of affairs that has caused the entirely incorrect idea that Chinese, while they can learn phenomenally quickly, cannot adequately apply their knowledge. This is where the Chihli River Commission functions educationally. It takes these best men and provides them with inducements—more particularly by placing them in self-respecting positions—to continue technical work.

Let it not be thought that this educational effect will be confined to the existing staff or that of the immediate future. It will go on indefinitely under a scheme for indefinite expansion of engineering activities for which the Chihli River Commission will form the fructifying cell.

I suggest that I have made my case that we are not in rivalry with education. Speaking as Mr. Hsiung's representatives we do not grudge the educationalist a penny of a half of the indemnity or of a further one-sixth if he can get it ; and the one-third, the loan only of which we ask for, will incidentally be used for a much-needed form of education which the colleges and universities cannot supply.

. . . . . .

Thus the opportunity created by the remission of the indemnity forms the one solitary chance for the relief from indescribable misery of tens of millions of people, and the saving of millions from death. It is not that this is the only opportunity that presents itself at the moment. As far as it is possible to foresee, it is the only opportunity that is likely to occur until China as a whole regenerates, and the date for that is one which China's most optimistic friends place at an indefinite distance.

I ask you to give this point your very earnest consideration—the point of a very special and exceptional opportunity which, if you allow it to pass, is unlikely to occur again.

I have learnt of three schools of thought among those who have the welfare of mankind at heart. The one says 'Fill the mind.' He disregards—simply disregards—that which it is customary to refer to in this connection as the belly. The second says ' First fill the belly—the mind will then be in a condition to take nourishment.' The third says ' Give food to the belly and the mind at the same time.' In the first category come the educational opponents to our scheme. The second category includes myself, but that is of no interest. In the third category is Mr. Hsiung.

Here is the respectable sum of £11,000,000 going begging, as it were, for the best purpose it can be put to for the benefit of the Chinese people. We ask for a third of it—as a loan only—leaving a half which I assume will go to education, and a further sixth for the educationalist to strive for. We ask for this for the purpose of a work that will ameliorate a monstrous physical and social evil, and which incidentally will provide a valuable form of education which the colleges cannot supply. We ask for that third not only for the purpose of that particular initiatory work, but also—and this is really the more important—of starting an organization on a career, the beneficent possibilities of which are inestimable.

And what is the attitude towards this of the first category ?

Not satisfied with five million pounds, not satisfied with over six and three-quarter millions, they demand the whole eleven millions !

Is that attitude in general reasonable ? Is it what one would expect from a class of men who embody, I suppose, a greater erudition than that of any other class. Take that attitude and examine it. Look at it from all possible aspects. Turn it upside down—pull it inside out in an endeavour to find a justification for it. I suggest you will be more likely to find condemnatory terms to apply to it; but I will use no such terms myself. For there can be no question of the sincere conscientiousness of their aims and the excellence of their intentions. I will limit myself to saying that their attitude seems to me to be a manifestation of one of those obsessions which are so apt to swamp the mentalities of those who concentrate too deeply on one engrossing interest—an obsession, in this case, of a philanthropic megalomaniac character.

Please realize this; so far as scholastic education is concerned there is a never-ending and constant supply of funds. Not enough, of course, for the philanthropic insatiability of the educationalist, but still, a good healthy flow. Think, for example, of the American and other millionaires making their wills and considering how they can make some return to humanity for what, in a sense, they have taken from it. In nine cases out of ten it takes the form of some educational endowment, and of these a not inconsiderable proportion goes to China.

Think of all the high intellectuality that is concentrated on the advancement of education—and on the means of acquiring funds for it—and, gentlemen, let me whisper this request. Think not only of the vast good which education does, but also of what education gone rotten does. I do not mean here the provision of a rotten education, but good education gone rotten. Think of Bolshevism; think of the present activities of students in China. I do not want to make all the capital I could of this dangerous exhibition of education gone rotten, but its existence demands attention.

. . . . . .

There is one point in the conservancy scheme generally which, while it forms no part of the immediate project, bulks large in my eyes as regards future benefit.

Next to floods the greatest evil is their opposite—droughts. Engineering works of the future will doubtless combine drainage—to which the immediate scheme is confined—with irrigation and with fertilization by silt deposit, as is done in Egypt with such huge advantage. Further, the northern plain includes vast tracts of at present unfertile alkaline lands which await only the skilled operation of the engineer to convert into highly fertile lands, with their large contribution to the land-tax.

In fact, these plains of ever-impending disaster are readily convertible into areas of unsurpassed fertility and prosperity. As far as can be humanly seen, the materialization of that desideratum rests on the decision about to be made. If our request is granted, the materialization will occur. If it be not, it is postponed to the Greek Calends.

. . . . . .

When a bad flood now occurs, the situation defies adequate description by myself. The water will not subside for months. Homes demolished; crops destroyed; no seeds for a new crop; no adequate communication for relief; dykes—hundreds of miles of them alone—out of water; huddled on these in miserable hovels of reeds and grass live millions of destitute with death stalking in and out among them; boiled willow leaves their only food; naked children with enormous pot-bellies and the skeleton unbifurcated legs of the starved; children sold into slavery and prostitution. Cannibalism? I do not know. Perhaps. Truly, I think, did I recently state in a letter to the *Morning Post* that of the sum-total of the world's misery no small fraction is concentrated in the flood-infested plains of China.

Gentlemen, on some of you may depend whether a third of the indemnity will go to form the nucleus of an organization for the amelioration of these terrible conditions, or whether, in addition to the large sum which I assume education will in any case get, that third will also be devoted to the acquirement of scholastic attainments.

Just a few words more and I am finished. The request for a third of the indemnity is Mr. Hsiung's decision. He knew, of course, the strength of the influence of the educationalist, and to make the grant a possibility he asked for a third only.

But now, freeing myself from the restriction of speaking to you on Mr. Hussey-Freke's behalf as the representative of Mr. Hsiung, I venture to add my own personal view, and it is this:—

The best benefit to China—incomparably the best—which could be secured by means of the relinquished indemnity, would be to devote the whole of the £11,000,000 to an endowment under suitable guarantees of an organization to undertake flood preventive work in China generally.

. . . . . .

If only this matter could be examined and judged solely on its merits; if only what Dr. Scott represents and what I have just represented could be weighed in a balance which indicated true values; if only—and this is the most important 'if'—if only the heavy finger of vested philanthropic interests could be kept off the weighing pans; I should have no apprehension as to what the results would be.

It may be—I cannot tell—that this is too much a counsel of perfection to render it a practicability, but most earnestly I beg of you to do what you can to make it such.

. . . . . .

APPENDIX B

(*See page* 178)

BASSE'S PROPOSED MEMORIAL TO THE THRONE

THE few foreigners who in the past have been granted the exalted privilege of an audience with Your Majesty, have either been royal, diplomatic, or in the high employment of your Government. In these cases audiences have, I take it, been of a purely formal nature, conveying a customary privilege on the foreigner concerned.

In my case, however, the high honour now accorded me seems to bear another character. My status is that which is derived from the Chinese rank generously conferred on me in consideration of my poor services and in consideration of my devotion to Your Majesty's person and to the cause of your country.

It is under these circumstances that I claim a privilege beyond what other foreigners could be entitled to, that is to say, the privilege of handing to Your Majesty a Memorial for your gracious consideration.

In reading this Memorial I beg that Your Majesty will realize the internal evidence that exists, that I am inspired merely by a hope of serving you—by a hope that I may be sowing a seed from which may grow the tree of benefit, not to myself, but to Your Majesty and to your country ; for on my side I see no other prospect than a harvest of dislike, and I fully understand that my present action may be my position's suicide.

In past ages, Your Majesty, the Mongolian race was the most powerful in the world, and when Genghis Khan and his successors some 500 years ago overran Russia and penetrated far into the heart of Europe, it was reasonable for the Mongols to be proud of their methods and of their race, and to consider themselves the centre about which the world revolved. But in those days the leaders of the people were hardy men and warriors, whose ambition was conquest, glory and power, and such an ambition inculcated in them the virtues of bravery, endurance and devotion. There were besides, in various parts of China, administrators and engineers whose works are to this day a wonder to Western experts, and by what they have left behind them they must have been men imbued with devotion to the public good.

See the existing monuments of China's past greatness—the recorded history of her warrior heroes and their conquests, her cities, palaces and temples, the remains of her roads, her canals and her bridges !

But, Your Majesty, what is the condition now ? The race itself has not altered. The same blood, uncontaminated by foreign mixture, still runs in the veins of the people—the same material from which were made the heroes of the past still exists in untold quantities. But the psychological factor in the making of heroes, where is it ? Where is the desire of glory for glory's sake ? Where are the sturdy virtues of the past—bravery, self-sacrifice and devotion to one's country ? The germs of these still lie in the nature of the people, but in the leaders of the people—the officials—where they should spring up, bud and bear fruit, where are they ?

Dead, dead—scorched and annihilated by the all-devouring flame of avarice.

The present conception of honour is the accumulation of wealth. Ambition makes riches its sole goal, and bravery devotes itself to daring and unscrupulous schemes of self-enrichment. The entire energies are used up in the race after silver, and no thought for the public good exists except such as is necessary to veneer the outward appearance to the present standard of Chinese officialdom.

But, O Sovereign, not only have the virtues of the ancients disappeared, but the vices which have taken their place are not merely tolerated but are incorporated into and indeed form the motive power of the modern administrative machine of your Empire. So that whatever the innate virtue of an official may be, he is perforce obliged, not only to acquiesce in the existence of, but also is made to participate in the evil practices of peculation and extortion in order to enable him to fulfil the functions of his position.

For this reason it is plain that the individual is not necessarily to blame ; it is the system that is at fault. In countries where human sacrifice is a ceremonial practice, virtue is measured only by moderation in its use ; entire abstinence does not appear possible even to the people from whom the victims are drawn. In countries where gross forms of sexual licence obtains, its evils are not plain to the people notwithstanding its obvious detrimentality. There is a proverb, Your Majesty, that a fox does not smell his own hole.

So here in your own country the existing bad practices are so bound up with the everyday routine and duties of official life that a perception of these evils in their proper magnitude is hard for a Chinese to obtain.

What I now pray to Heaven is that Your Majesty, reviewing the disastrous troubles which have fallen on China in the past few years, may get a glimpse of how big a factor the lust for money and the consequent absence of public-spiritedness has been in the matter of China's misfortunes.

There have been, and are now, schemes of reform initiated by Your Majesty's Government, such as foreign drill for your armies, a modern fleet and colleges for Western technical learning. Such schemes, however, can bear no useful fruit until honesty of administration has first been established. To plant these Western conceptions in the soil of existing Chinese official procedure is like trying to make camels work in a Canton summer, or elephants in a Peking winter. They cannot do it; they can work only in an environment suited to them.

It may be that Your Majesty will consider that the view which I have put forward is an exaggerated one, or even as a libel on your Government's administration; but I beg Your Majesty to remember that the very exaltation of your position makes a realization of the situation especially difficult for you. Your position is on a mountain top; the lesser hills are around you, but you cannot see the plain. Many facts are doubtless kept from you, and some, such as the one I am now dealing with, it is certain that no Chinese official would dare to approach you upon.

This latter consideration, above all others, has been the determining factor in my deciding to present this Memorial. I have it borne in upon me that on me devolves, as an humble agent of destiny and as Your Majesty's most faithful servant, the pointing out of existing evils in no uncertain voice.

Look back, Your Majesty, in your country's annals and see how the most famous sovereigns of the past—those whose memories obtain the greatest reverence to-day—were those who dealt successfully with crises in their country's history.

A crisis exists now. China lies a sick and wounded dragon surrounded by beasts of prey as vultures surround the dying camel in the wilderness; no sharpening of claws or spitting of fire can possibly serve to defend her; the one and only remedy is the recovery of health, when those who batten on corpses and drink the juice of graves will go elsewhere for their meals. What therefore is needed to deal with the situation is the physician.

O Sovereign, be that doctor! Diagnose the disease, prescribe the medicine, and hand your name down to posterity as the greatest of sovereigns inasmuch as you were the greatest of nations' physicians. The disease has been pointed out; the medicine must be decided upon according to the august wisdom of Your Majesty. I venture, however, to bring the following suggestions to Your Majesty's notice:—

Gather round you not those who fatuously believe that the China of to-day is in the same position now relatively to other nations as she was after the founding of your dynasty, and who act as if this were the case ; but rather those who would wish her to regain that position, and who intelligently realize how much she has lost of late years in the race of nations.

Commence a crusade against dishonesty and extortion, and bear in mind that the source of a river is in the mountains, and that those immediately about your Imperial person are probably the most notable exponents of the system to which they themselves are perforce subject.

Make your Court an example of what a Yamen from a Viceroy's to a Hsien's should be.

Put riches at a discount by refusing to allow it to be a factor in official advancement.

Let your advisers elaborate an efficient scheme for the collection and the transmission of revenues, for the scrupulous care of the country's finances, and for the payment of suitable salaries to officials from a Viceroy downwards.

Institute, in fact, a radical fiscal reform, and by precept and example inculcate among your officials a sense of the value of integrity and efficiency.

APPENDIX C

(*See page* 184)

THE YELLOW RIVER

(*Extract from a letter written by the author to Mr. Oudendijk, the Minister for Holland at Peking in* 1906)

I SAW, during my Yellow river trip, a great deal of the river officials —probably more than any one else has done. Their desire for the right thing is undoubted; they have no illusions concerning their own methods; and they look forward eagerly to the adoption of some comprehensive scheme.

Two things are required before anything can be done. The first is a general administrative reform. Until this is effected no such huge scheme as Yellow river work would have a chance of success. The second is the formulation of an engineering scheme of such a nature as will convince the Chinese of its practicability.

And this, I take it, is the part which interests you specially in order that your own people may have a chance of being concerned in the work. Regarding this I will express to you the following opinion :—

The Yellow river is entirely different from any other in the world. However eminent an engineer may be, his experience in river work is limited to the particular rivers he has worked at or studied, and his dictum based on generalizations from other rivers carries no great weight with me. I am referring to no one in particular, but I include in my mind even my dear old friend Mr. de Rijke, than whom no sounder engineer exists.

In all other rivers in the world—even in the Mississippi, which is perhaps the one most resembling the Yellow river—the problem is to get such silt, as must be borne by the river, down to the sea, and to preserve it as navigable channel. In the case of the Yellow river I am absolutely convinced that it is impossible to get the silt, which the river must carry, down to the sea.

Again, in most cases the problem is a navigation problem. In some cases, generally small ones, the problem is a drainage one. When the problem is a drainage one, *i.e.* the getting away of water, it is almost always the case that drainage and navigation are opposed to one another. What is good for one is bad for the other. The Yellow river problem is a drainage one, pure and simple, not a navigation one. But above all it is a sedimentation problem, and as such is perhaps unique.

The function of the Yellow river in nature is the formation and raising of the Great Plain. In other great rivers of an alluvial nature their plains are comparatively restricted, the raising of them is partly completed down to the sea, and their principal function is the extension of the plain seaward. But in the case of the Yellow river conditions are entirely different. Its plain is incomparably greater than that of any other river in the world, and it has not nearly yet completed its raising. Notwithstanding all the works to confine the river to a definite bed, I believe that not more than 10 per cent. of the silt borne by it reaches the sea. The remaining 90 per cent. is deposited in accordance with nature's intention, and no efforts of men will ever prevent this action taking place. But what can be done is to guide nature's forces and control the sedimentation, which *must* take place, by an ever-continual system of depositing areas.

Academic schemes such as have been proposed—construction of reservoirs in the mountain valleys, the afforestation of drainage areas, the protection of loess cliffs, the obtaining of an ideal section for the river, dredging work, etc.—are no solutions. Such merely go, as it were, to the skin of the problem and do not get at its heart. *And such can never be acceptable to the Chinese*, who, although they have no technical knowledge of a comprehensive kind about river engineering, yet seem to have an intuition in this respect. This I think is the view which may interest you.

I believe the problem can be properly tackled only by a clever engineer, who divests himself of all preconceived ideas about rivers generally and who immerses himself—soaks—in the drainage conditions of the Great Plain as a whole.

On this matter my interest is so keen that I feel almost prophetic.

I see raised areas bordering the Yellow river in parts safe against all inundation. The river with the greater part of its load removed has now its bed below the plain and is easily controlled. The present devastated low lands are fertilized by suitable flooding and are rich with crops.

Not only the Yellow river but the rivers draining the Shansi hills are also bordered with lands of great fertility and free from the swamps and morasses now existing. The rivers are now looked upon as friends instead of as enemies. And all is peace and plenty!

Of course before any definite scheme is formulated surveys must be made, observations taken and all details closely studied. But I believe the general nature of the problem and the general nature of the solution can be arrived at without elaborate surveys ; and in fact that such an indication of a solution of a more definite and promising kind than has as yet been forthcoming is a necessary preliminary.

I have frequently discussed the Yellow river problem with de Rijke and he accords entirely with the view I have expressed in this letter.

APPENDIX D

(*See page* 263)

INSTRUCTIONS TO BOARDING OFFICERS

(*Relative to the seizure of German steamers in Shanghai harbour after the breach of diplomatic relations between China and Germany in March* 1917)

You are detailed to board the ' —— ' and take charge of her in the name of the Chinese Government. For this purpose you are provided with a launch and —— men and with —— boarding ladders.

You must expect to find the ships' ladders hoisted up.

You will be accompanied by Lieutenants —— and Engineer ——.

The officers will be armed with revolvers only. The men will be armed with rifles and bayonets and with 100 rounds of ammunition.

On arriving alongside, the boarding ladders must be promptly placed, and immediately you and the officers will board by them, followed by the guard.

On gaining the deck you will ask for the Captain to come on deck, and as soon as you know who he is you will hand to him the attached note, at the same time saying :—

' I have to ask you to fall in your officers and crew on deck immediately.'

In the meantime the Engineer Officer will have proceeded at once to the engine-room to see that the Kingston valve, etc., is not tampered with, and your guard will have fallen in.

Rifles so far are not to be loaded.

On the supposition that there is no resistance, your duty will now be straightforward. You have to get the crew out of the ship with their personal effects in such a manner that they do not get the chance to combine against you or to, say, blow up the ship with explosives.

To that end you must insist on all hands falling in on deck. Then a number of the German sailors, not exceeding ten, should be told to go to their quarters and get their effects. These should be accompanied by an officer and a guard. When these come on deck they should be put on the launch. The remaining men will then be treated similarly.

Lastly, the ship's officers, each accompanied by a Chinese Officer and a guard, should be asked to pack up their personal effects or to lock them up, and then should be put on the launch.

The Captain should be allowed to remain behind if he wishes to make an inventory of the ship, but if so he is to be kept under constant guard.

The officers and crew and their effects should then be taken to the Cruiser ' —— ' and from there allowed to proceed on shore by sampan.

If obedience to your instructions is given the greatest courtesy is to be shown to the officers and crew. Otherwise you must do whatever is necessary to enforce your orders.

If resistance is made, or threatened, or if your orders are not obeyed, you will order your men to load their rifles. You will previously have given them strict orders that on no account are they to fire without orders unless personally attacked while acting as a guard. In any case it is very desirable that if shooting does occur that the Germans start it.

On the other hand, disobedience to orders must be enforced at once by physical restraint.

If you are attacked, however, you must act vigorously and take possession of the ship at all costs. In this case the German officers and crew must be held prisoners and disarmed, and taken to the ' —— .'

In the absence of resistance you will, subsequently to taking charge, hand to the German Captain a receipt in the form supplied.

Having taken charge of the ship, you will immediately provide that all cabins, staterooms, etc., and any place where movable property exists be sealed up. It is needless to say that anything in the way of looting by your men would be very disgraceful, and it may be desirable to warn them against it.

After the cabins, etc., have been sealed, the officer in charge is to await instructions as to a search, and he is not to undertake it without instructions.

NOTE TO BE HANDED BY THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE BOARDING PARTY TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP CONCERNED

I have been instructed to take charge of your vessel on the discontinuance of diplomatic relations between China and Germany.

I do not take possession of your vessel but merely police charge.

Your officers and crew are required to proceed on shore with their effects immediately.

I will give you a receipt for the ship and, if you elect to remain behind to prepare with me an inventory of fittings and stores, I will give you a receipt for them also.

Except in the matter of leaving your ship in my charge you are under no restraint whatever.

APPENDIX E

(*See page* 264)

MEMORANDUM ON MEASURES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT IN THE EVENT OF CHINA DECLARING WAR ON GERMANY

By W. F. Tyler

The main considerations appear to be these :—

I. Should precautionary measures be taken independently of or in conjunction with the Chinese Authorities ? Should those precautions taken rest on the authority of the community's officials or should they rest on the declaration by China regarding public safety, or should both grounds operate ?

II. What rights exist under international law to deal with Germans in China and the Settlement ? Should acts in connection with Germans be limited to what is permissible under international law, having in view the general discarding of all law by the Germans ?

III. What precautions are desirable in regard to public safety and to which of them is it expedient to give effect ?

As regards I. :—The status of the Settlement is very exceptional, and the subject of this memorandum cannot be satisfactorily dealt with without some reference to it.

So far as treaties are concerned China has almost full sovereignty within it, except as regards jurisdiction over foreigners. That right of full sovereignty has, however, to a considerable extent lapsed owing to the gradual growth of practices which have in effect disregarded it. The Chinese Government has actively in some cases and tacitly in others acquiesced in certain of these practices, so that they may be considered as legally operative notwithstanding their variance with the treaties. Towards other practices the Chinese Government has been in passive opposition, and towards some in active opposition.

These practices can be stated in three categories :—

(i) Those which were obviously necessary for the existence and welfare of the Settlement, *e.g.* freedom from unrestricted jurisdiction over Chinese residents in the Settlement by Chinese officials.

(ii) Those which may be admitted to be for the good of the Settlement, but which involved such a further alienation of China's treaty rights as to cause her to oppose them, *e.g.* the existing question of the status of the Mixed Court.

(iii) Those which are based on extravagant and wrong ideas, and which are harmful both to the Settlement and to China, *e.g.* the so-called 'rights of asylum.'

These practices—good, doubtful and bad—have come into existence in connection with needs or supposed needs in time of quietude and in times of domestic turbulence in China, and their justification can be based only on needs in those circumstances.

Now comes a state of war between China and Germany, and China in accordance with her undoubted right repudiates the hitherto treaty rights of Germans to exterritoriality. Even if the abrogation of this right is not complete, it will at all events exist in respect to matters affecting 'the safety of the state.'

Thus a properly constituted authority exists for taking those exceptional precautions against Germans which a state of war makes necessary or desirable. On the other hand, the Settlement Authorities have no legal authority for the taking of extraordinary precautions against Germans, which do not come within the four corners of peace practice. They could, of course, as an emergency measure act without that authority as a matter of expediency, and should the need arise it is to be hoped that they will do so. It would, however, be unwise — because unnecessary—to so act, in the presence of China's legal authority in the matter, so long as that authority was adequately exercised. Accordingly, it is assumed that, at all events to start with, extraordinary action in connection with Germans in the Settlement should rest on the authority of the Chinese Government.

There is, however, much more in this matter of Chinese Authority than is indicated in the foregoing. On the declaration of war China becomes the Ally of the Entente Powers. We want her to be more than an ally merely in name. There is valuable assistance which she can give in various directions which need not be mentioned here. As she will be a partner—to whatever degree in the great undertaking —she must be treated as a partner. No longer must the Settlement look upon the Chinese Government as something to traditionally oppose. It becomes something to co-operate with in the most cordial possible manner and to encourage. There could be no greater discouragement to the Chinese Government than a failure on the Settlement's part to give this cordial co-operation.

The restricted municipal view must be discarded; the broad view of what is for the good of the Great Cause must be adopted, and anything which stands in its way—whatever prejudices may have previously been attached to it—must be swept aside.

It would appear that the best policy for the Settlement Authorities to adopt would be as follows :—

(*a*) If the Chinese Government desire any reasonable act in the Settlement, to offer to undertake it with the municipal police or to do it in conjunction with the Chinese, as may be considered best.

(*b*) If the Settlement Authorities desire any extraordinary action, to seek the authority of the Chinese officials thereto, and either give effect to it by themselves or jointly with the Chinese, as may be considered best.

(*c*) To support and encourage the co-operative exercise of Chinese authority in connection with the situation, so long as it is reasonable and proper.

(*d*) To particularly avoid any unnecessary manifestation of jealousy to such action.

(*e*) To require, however, that no action be taken by the Chinese officials in the Settlement without the Settlement Authorities' acquiescence. The need for this obviously exists both in the interest of China and of the Settlement.

(*f*) In the case of an arrested German, to frame the charge, if possible, so that according to the Chinese declaration he come under the jurisdiction of the Mixed Court.

There is perhaps some danger that the Chinese officials may cause the question of China's jurisdiction over Germans in the Settlement to be involved with the question of the constitution and status of the Mixed Court as it now is. This is a matter that would require great tact in dealing with were it raised. What is involved in this matter—the history of the question and all that belongs to it—is little understood, and the mixing up of the matter with the war situation would be very regrettable.

As regards consideration II. :—The rights under international law which would cover action in connection with Germans in China and the Settlement cannot help us much, because international law can, as the result of Germany's practices, hardly be said to exist. There remains only the law of humanity.

Yet it may be worth considering what international law used to say on the subject.

The only points of interest appear to be these :—

(*a*) War can be held as sufficient grounds for cancelling the provisions of a treaty giving exterritorial rights to Germans.

(*b*) German subjects in China should not be made prisoners, *i.e.* should not be interned.

This law no longer exists. Internment of enemy subjects has become the rule rather than the exception.

(*c*) Enemy subjects can be compelled to leave China.

(*d*) Commercial intercourse between belligerent subjects is a matter for 'municipal' law. It will be interesting to see what China does in this connection.

(*e*) Private enemy property may not be confiscated, except ships and their cargo in certain circumstances, which are not those of German ships in Chinese ports.

This question hardly concerns the subject of this memorandum, but it may be said that, in view of the way Germany has treated private property in occupied territory, she is no longer entitled to the operation of the above rule in her favour.

The war, as conducted by the Germans and also to some extent in other respects, has brought about such a disregard for previously accepted principles that international law as it existed before hardly does so now. On the part of Germany all law has been thrown to the winds, including that of elementary humanity. The Allies are fighting an essentially lawless and barbarous enemy. The Allies have adhered to principles of humanity, but Great Britain in particular has been forced in other respects to override previously accepted principles in dealing with neutral shipping and trade.

There is thus no outstanding need for China to be guided by the strict letter of what is laid down in text-books on international law. She need only consider what is expedient for securing her safety and for assisting her Allies within the limits of humane conduct.

As regards III. :—The subject of desirable precautions will be dealt with herein only in a general manner.

It should be realized that the need for precautions generally and the nature of those precautions cannot be gauged solely by a consideration of danger considered to be actually existent.

In times like these it is not merely probabilities that require guarding against but possibilities. The world—and the Settlement itself—has had ample evidence of Germany's organization for destruction even in neutral countries—and even where such destructions seemed objectless. That organization could not now be stopped by the German Government itself. Its danger here is quite independent of the general spirit of the Germans in the Settlement.

It is not intended to imply that there is positively such danger here. But there undoubtedly may be. The Settlement might, for example, form the shelter for an attempt to damage the Arsenal, as it has so often served before.

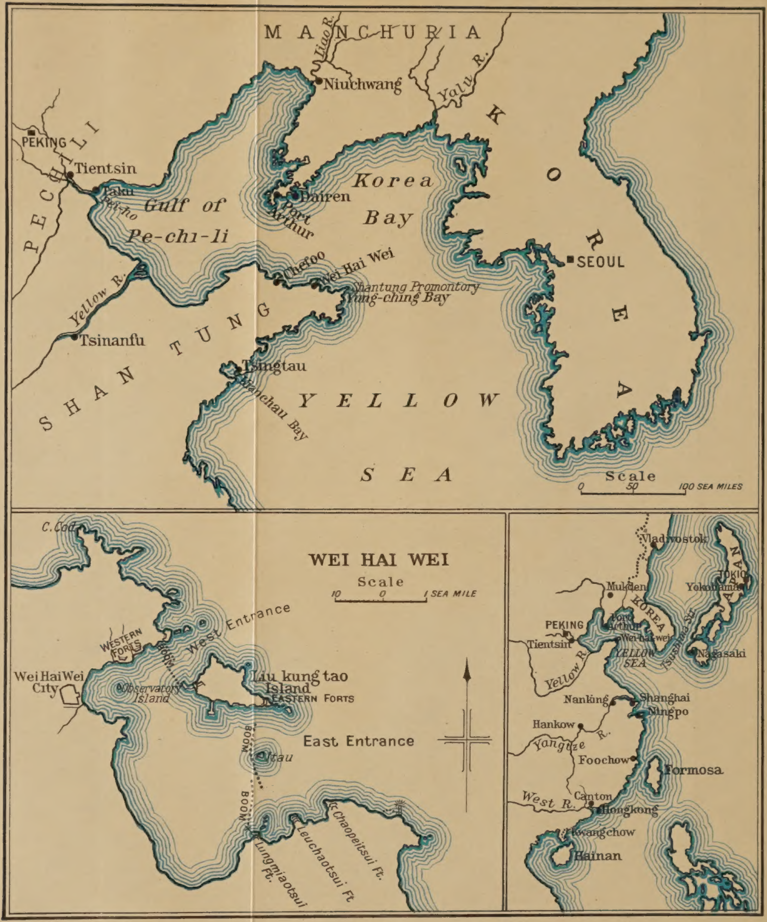
Apart, however, from the existence or non-existence of danger, precautions require to be taken and control instituted as a matter of principle to, as it were, mark and label the situation. There should, it is considered, be no desire to humiliate the individual German ; but that the Germans generally should be made to realize that they are under special control and supervision by or on behalf of the Chinese Government, and that the Chinese should realize that fact, is but a suitable and proper condition in all the circumstances of the case.

Obviously the Germans should be obliged to register. It is believed that the registration already ordered by the Government has not been completed. It would be well to have a joint registry and some periodic means of keeping it up to date, and of controlling the movements of Germans.

The mere declaration of war-like articles by German merchants and the handing over of such declared articles is not sufficient. To meet the case searches are obviously necessary.

It is not considered that the internment of Germans against whom there is no suspicion of evil intention is desirable. It would be a very expensive proceeding ; would be very difficult for China to carry out effectively and creditably, and there seems to be no necessity for it.

On the other hand, it seems suitable that any German now in the country, who by his previous occupation can be considered to be under the direct control of his government, should be so interned. This would include such men as ex-members of the legation guard and any consular officials who have not left.


M A N C H U R I A
Liao R.
Niuchwang
Yalu R.
K O R E A
PEKING
PE-CHI-LI
Tientsin
Taku
Pei-ho
Gulf of
Pe-chi-li
Korea
Bay
Dairen
Port
Arthur
SEOUL
Chefoo
Wei Hai Wei
Shantung Promontory
Yung-ching Bay
Yellow R.
Tsinanfu
S H A N T U N G
Tsingtau
Kiauchau Bay
Y E L L O W
S E A
Scale
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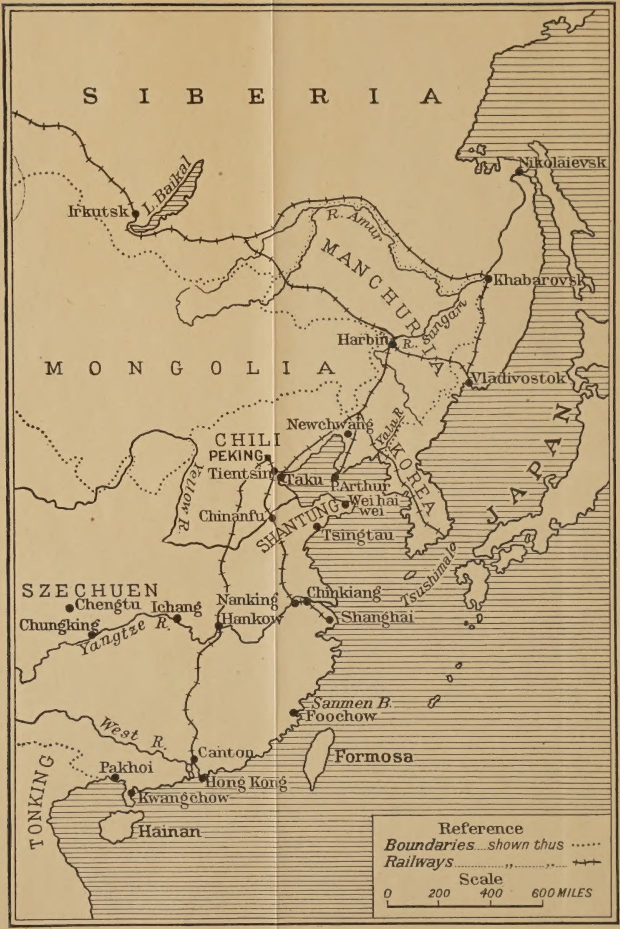
50
100 SEA MILES
C. Cod
WEI HAI WEI
Scale
10
0
1 SEA MILE
West Entrance
WESTERN FORTS
BOOM
Wei Hai Wei City
Observatory Island
Liu kung tao Island
EASTERN FORTS
East Entrance
BOOM
Jitau
BOOM
Chaopeitsui Ft.
Leuchaotsui Ft.
Lungmiaotsui Ft.
Vladivostok
JAPAN
TOKIO
Yokohama
Mukden
KOREA
Port Arthur
PEKING
Tientsin
Wei-hai-wei
YELLOW SEA
Tsushima St.
Nagasaki
Yellow R.
Nanking
Shanghai
Ningpo
Hankow
Yangtze R.
Foochow
Formosa
West R.
Canton
Hongkong
Kwangchow
Hainan


S I B E R I A
L. Baikal
Irkutsk
Nikolaievsk
R. Amur
MANCHURIA
Khabarovsk
Sungari
R.
Harbin
M O N G O L I A
Vladivostok
Newchwang
Yalu R.
CHILI
PEKING
Tientsin
Taku
P. Arthur
KOREA
JAPAN
Yellow R.
Wei hai wei
Chinanfu
SHANTUNG
Tsingtau
Tsushima
SZECHUEN
Chengtu
Ichang
Nanking
Chinkiang
Chungking
Yangtze R.
Hankow
Shanghai
Sanmen B.
Foochow
West R.
Canton
Formosa
TONKING
Pakhoi
Hong Kong
Kwangchow
Hainan
Reference
Boundaries....shown thus
Railways........ " .... " ....
Scale
0
200
400
600 MILES

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